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ABSTRACT

This final report summarizes an extensive evaluation of the COMP-LAB project, a course which integrates carefully defined classroom instruction with an autotutorial writing laboratory for teaching basic writing and rhetoric, particularly to students impaired by foreign language or nonstandard speech. Information on the project background and the development of procedures for its evaluation are presented. The major portion of the report discusses the actual results of the evaluation, also giving the students' and instructors' points of view, and includes information on the nature of the students involved in the lab and on the costs and benefits of such a program. The report concludes from this evaluation that the COMP-LAB course is superior to the traditional course, especially in improving student writing. (HTH)

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AN EVALUATION OF THE COMP-LAB PROJECT

Final Report

Mary Epes, Carolyn Kirkpatrick, Michael Southwell

York College, CUNY

A Project of the Exxon Education Foundation, 1978-79

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AN EVALUATION OF THE COMP-LAB PROJECT

Highlights of the Findings

1. Attitudes. There were no significant differences between experimental students (using the COMP-LAB) and control students (using the traditional classroom) in attitudes toward their courses or toward writing in general. Neither students nor teachers expressed any difficulty with the laboratory practice.

2. Error-count evaluation of writings. There were no significant differences between the two groups of students at the beginning of the semester; at the end of the semester, experimental students were significantly better than control students in three out of six important variables. During the course of the semester, both groups of students improved significantly (though confidence levels for the experimental students' improvement are much higher).

3. Holistic evaluation of writings. There were no significant differences between the two groups of students at either the beginning or the end of the semester. During the course of the semester, experimental students improved the overall quality of their writing significantly, while control students did not.

4. Pass rates. There were no significant differences in pass rates for the two groups of students, despite the fact that teacher contact time for experimental students had been decreased by up to 60%.

5. Costs. The COMP-LAB course's reduction in teacher contact time effected a savings of about 20% in instructional costs (at York College, for the evaluation semester).

6. Transferability. The course can be transferred to other colleges with a minimum of difficulty, and it can then be expected to function efficiently.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In 1978-79, the Exxon Education Foundation supported a project to evaluate the COMP-LAB college basic writing course. The project was administered by Professors Mary Epes, Carolyn Kirkpatrick, and Michael Southwell, of York College, CUNY. Formative Evaluation Research Associates, Inc., of Ann Arbor, was retained to carry out the evaluation at three sites, York College, Metropolitan Community College (in Minneapolis), and South Central Community College (in New Haven), during the Fall 1978 semester. The experimental course was found to be at least as effective as (and in some ways more effective than) the traditional course in helping students to improve their writing and to pass the course, despite a reduction of up to 60% in teacher contact time for experimental students.

FERA's report is contained in its entirety in Appendix A. This Final Report is intended as a broader discussion of FERA's findings, and should be read in conjunction with that report.

Chapter II

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The crisis in students' writing skills is by now a well-known story. Increasing numbers of nontraditional students, with severe writing problems caused in large part by interference from nonstandard or foreign-language speech, are entering college, and a better way to help them improve their writing skills is needed. It has not been sufficiently recognized that these students are not just correcting their writing, but are actually acquiring a new language, standard written English. Repetitive and incremental practice is essential for such language acquisition. Laboratories are a likely alternative to classrooms for providing this practice, but too often writing laboratories simply replace teacher time with (often inferior) tutor time, and have been unable in any case to offer anything but unsystematic, ineffective, and often boring materials.

In 1975, Professors Epes, Kirkpatrick, and Southwell began working together on a departmental committee to define English 100 at York as a remedial course concentrating on instruction in basic written word and sentence correctness, and in elementary rhetoric. Criteria were established for passing the course, and a departmental final examination was instituted. There was thus general department-wide uniformity about the content of the

course, and our attention could be turned to improving the efficiency of delivering the instruction.

During the Spring 1976 semester, Epes began experimenting with individualizing instruction in English 100, supplementing whole-class instruction by setting up tape recorders in a corner of her classroom, and assigning grammar audiotapes to her students. During the Fall 1976 semester she was joined by Kirkpatrick and Southwell, and all three teachers collaborated in beginning to revise the audiotapes, and to write accompanying exercises which could be done autotutorially (that is, which could be done and corrected by the students themselves, without their teachers' supervision). During the Spring 1977 semester an unused classroom was converted into a primitive laboratory, and all three teachers assigned students to use this lab as an alternative to portions of the classroom instruction; in the meantime, development of the exercises and audiotapes continued. A two-year grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, beginning in the Fall 1977 semester, enabled us to develop an English 100 course which integrates carefully-defined classroom instruction with the work in the autotutorial writing laboratory (known as the COMP-LAB). This model basic writing course was designed to be transferred to other teachers and settings.

In the COMP-LAB course, classroom instruction consists of work on elementary rhetoric and syntax. In the laboratory, audiotapes and exercises bring together a variety of recent and sophisticated language-teaching techniques, to provide students

with an opportunity for learning the forms of standard written English, and extensive practice in using them in sentence and paragraph contexts. The materials are almost completely self-teaching: they are structured incrementally (so that each builds on what has come before, and prepares for what will follow), and even the most complex exercises have invariant answers. Students can thus work efficiently in the COMP-LAB on problems of correctness; they can work through the exercises, and check their work, without assistance from their teachers. Because they are able to work independently, they can work at their own speed, in a climate of positive reinforcement rather than negative feedback. The burden for learning is thus placed where it properly belongs, on the students themselves. Additionally, the teacher is freed from the necessity of constant repetition of elementary grammatical material. The diversion of part of the classroom work to a laboratory setting permits a reduction in classroom contact hours, with the potential for producing savings in instructional costs.

The first year of the project was conceived of as a formative one. The following activities took place:

1. The laboratory was furnished, and supervisory personnel were hired.
2. Writing of 13 modules of exercises was completed.
3. Audiotapes to accompany the exercises were produced.
4. A syllabus was created to coordinate classroom and lab work.
5. Record- and time-keeping procedures were developed.

6. The transferability of the course was tested, by hiring three adjunct teachers for additional sections of the course, developing procedures for training them to teach the course, and studying their reactions and experiences.

7. Using data from attitudinal questionnaires, from the experiences of the three adjunct teachers, and from a participant-observation study (carried out by a graduate student from another institution), lab materials and course procedures were refined.

8. Plans for evaluating the course were pilot-tested.

9. Arrangements were made for transferring the course to Metropolitan Community College in Minneapolis, and to South Central Community College in New Haven.

10. Information about the project was disseminated, by presentations at professional conferences, written reports, and responses to inquiries.

By the second year of the project, development was complete, and so evaluation and transfer could begin. Experimental teachers at the two transfer sites were trained by the Directors in September. Southwell had primary responsibility for the training at Metropolitan; Epes had primary responsibility for the training at South Central. Two sessions of training, totaling approximately 12 hours, were provided at each site (plus telephone consultation).

The Exxon funding permitted a careful and comprehensive assessment of the value of the experimental course at all three sites to be carried out by an external evaluator who was unconnected with the development of the project. Such an evaluation would be more persuasive than any we could produce ourselves.

Chapter III

EVALUATION PLANS

3.1 DEVELOPMENT

Planning for the evaluation took place during Summer 1978, in collaboration with Professor Charles R. Cooper, then of SUNY/Buffalo. A conventional comparison-group research design was set up, which permitted comparing the performance of experimental students (in sections using the COMP-LAB model) with that of control students (in sections using traditional methods in the classroom), at York and at the two transfer sites. The following procedures were planned:

1. Attitudes of students both toward their courses and toward writing in general, based on interviews and questionnaire responses, would be described and compared.

2. Attitudes of teachers toward their courses and students, based on interviews, would be described and compared.

3. Error rates in early and late student writings would be compared. As a check on whether the COMP-LAB course's emphasis on error correction impeded rhetorical development, a sample of papers would be read holistically (that is, for overall quality) as well, and the results would be compared.

4. Demographic factors, including pass rates, retention rates, ethnicity, age and gender of students, etc., would be described and compared.

5. Administrative concerns, including cost and scheduling considerations, would be described, based on interviews.

Disagreements with Cooper over the role of the Directors in planning and interpreting the evaluation[1] led to his replacement by FERA for the completion of the evaluation. In November 1978, the Directors and Margaret A. Talburtt and John Meeker, of FERA, reached an agreement which permitted the Directors to collaborate in the development of necessary additional plans and procedures for the evaluation, and in the interpretation of the data, but excluded the Directors from any involvement in the collection and analysis of the data. This evaluation model was developed to take advantage of the Directors' knowledge about what the COMP-LAB course was designed to do, and about what conclusions could reasonably be drawn from the kind of data that would be collected; at the same time, it preserved the objectivity of the evaluation. Collection and analysis of the attitudinal, demographic, and administrative data would be the sole responsibility of FERA; evaluation of the writings would be subcontracted. A copy of this agreement is contained in Appendix B. This model is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

In almost all educational settings, it is difficult to control for variables. However, an attempt was made to control all variables other than instructional method. Random assignment of students to treatment groups was not possible. But at all three

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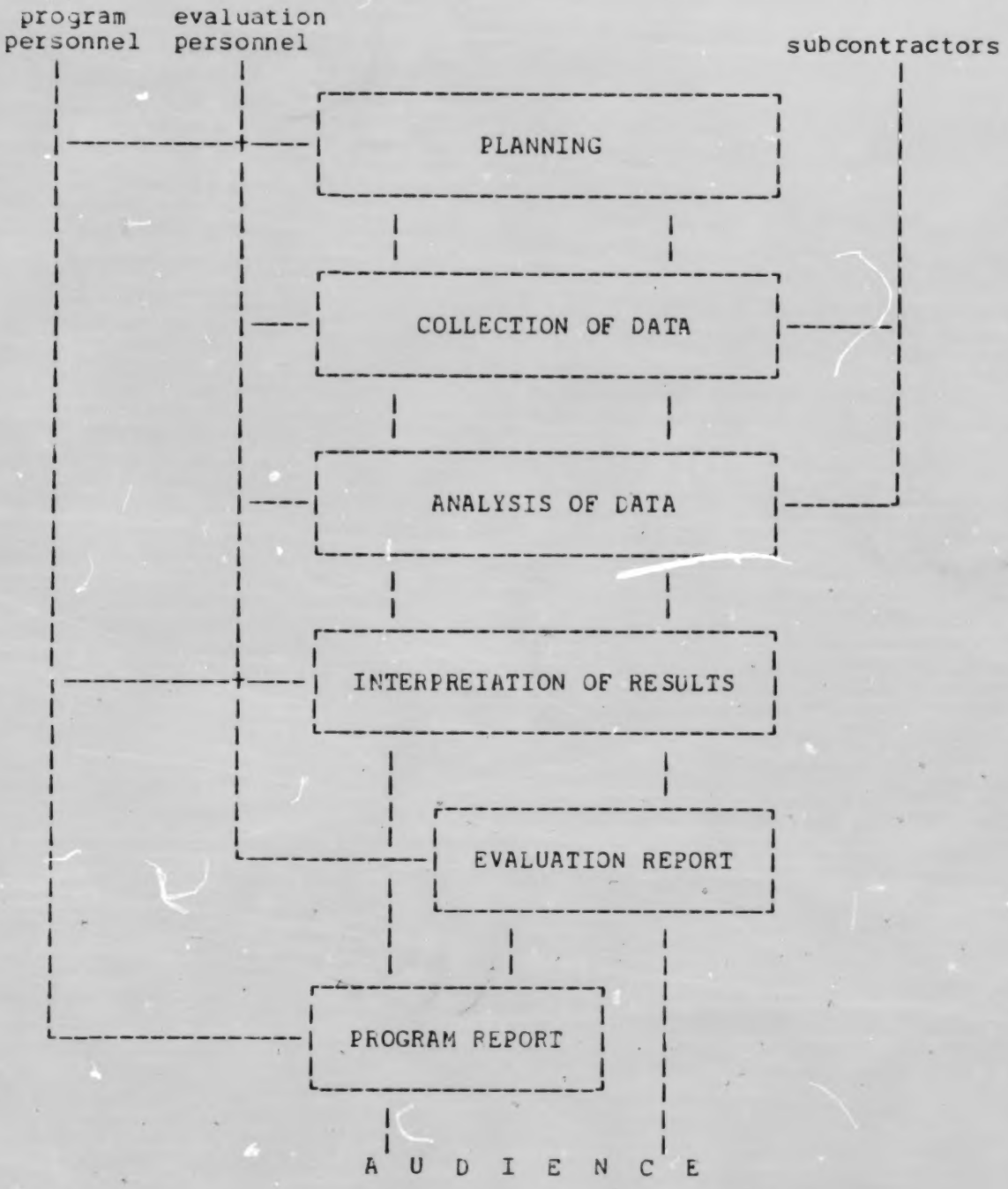
[1]Underlying this disagreement was the current debate between qualitative and quantitative techniques in evaluation research, usefully surveyed in Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research, ed. Thomas D. Cook and Charles S. Reichardt (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979).

A Management Model for Program Evaluation



**NOTE: This figure is intended to replace Figure 1 on page 8 of "An Evaluation of The COMP-LAB Project."

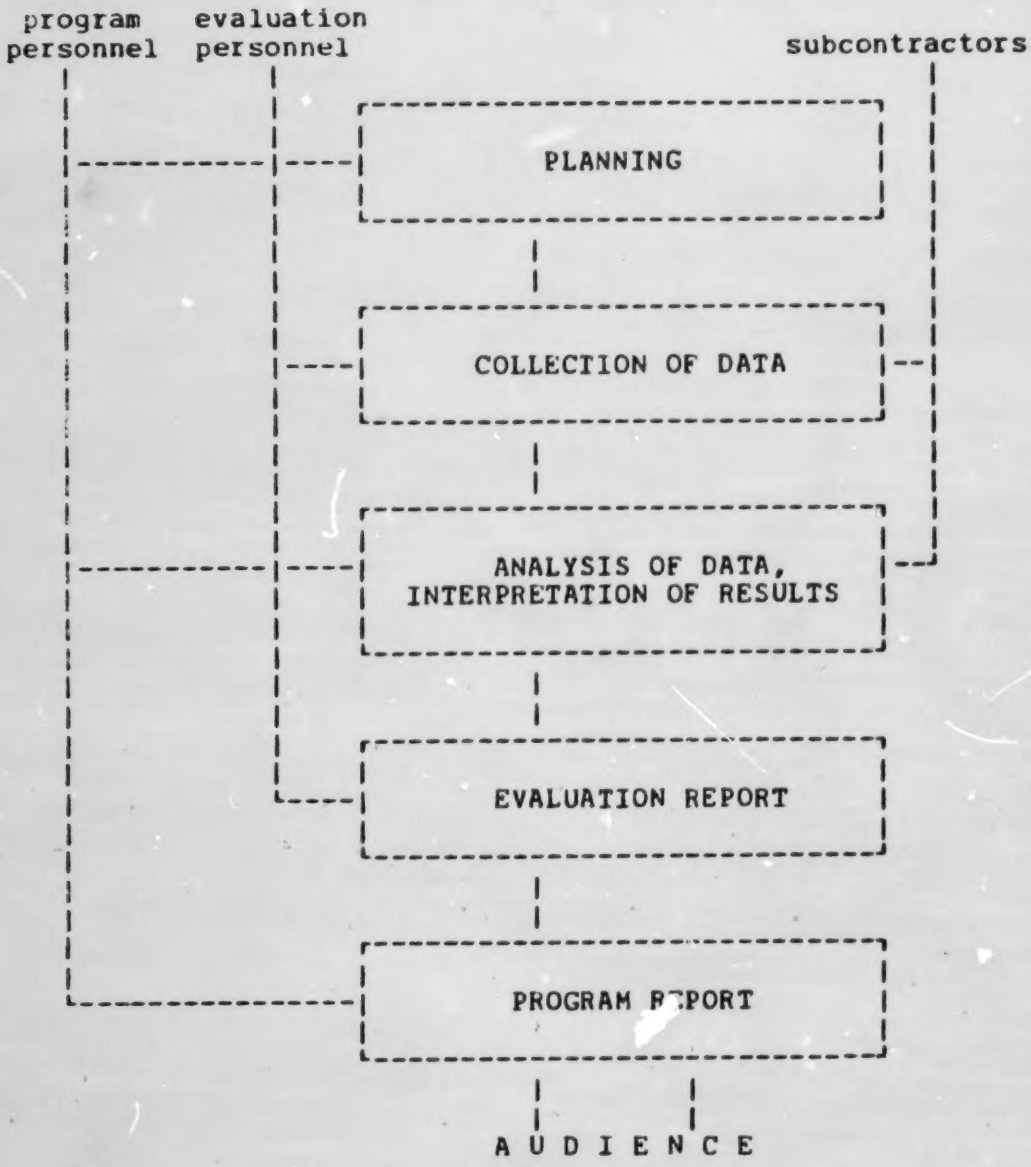


Figure 1: A Management Model for Program Evaluation

sites, nothing in students' registration information indicated which sections would use the COMP-LAB, and students registered for sections in accord with their own personal requirements. There is no reason to think that students were not distributed

randomly between the experimental and control groups (see, however, the discussion of the student populations beginning on page 19, and the discussion of error rates beginning on page 21).

An attempt was made to assure that both experimental and control sections had the best possible teachers. Insofar as possible (that is, at York and Metropolitan), only sections taught by teachers with some experience at teaching on this level, and with an expressed interest in teaching students on this level, were chosen for the evaluation.

It might be thought that a more convincing evaluation would result if the program developers were not involved in teaching the experimental course. But one positive benefit from this design was that both experimental and control teachers (at least at York) were committed to their respective methodologies. In addition, to restrict the evaluation to teachers not involved in the development of the course would make it difficult to assess the course's transferability; the evaluation had been designed to provide information about the degree to which other teachers found the course congenial, by comparing their feelings to those of the developers. These factors outweighed any reluctance to accept this design.

3.2 EVALUATION OF WRITINGS

Since the COMP-LAB course was designed to improve student writing, the most important part of the evaluation was comparison of writings created by students in the COMP-LAB course to those created by students in control sections.

Testing of writing tasks. The topics for all the papers used in the evaluation were carefully pilot-tested during the Fall 1977 semester, to assure that the different topics made comparable demands upon students. Each writing task which was chosen elicited writing ranging from good to bad from the students. This gave us confidence that the quality of the writing in these papers was determined chiefly by the level of the students' skill; there was nothing about the task itself or its phrasing (ambiguities, or assumed information, for example) that might affect the quality of the writing. The tasks used were tested an entire year before the evaluation, so that it could be assumed that no student would have previously written on the topics used in the evaluation.

Assignment and writing of papers. Papers were written at approximately the same times during the semester by all students (both experimental and control) at all three sites. Topics for the papers were assigned in a crossover design, to insure that some members of both the experimental and the control groups would write on each topic at pre-test time, and some at post-test time.

Assignment sheets for papers were developed, so that instructions for writing the papers would be essentially identical for all students at all sites. (Copies of the assignment sheets used for a narrative-expository and for an argumentative paper are contained in Appendix C.) Conventional wisdom suggests that it is helpful to students, particularly weak students, to specify

such factors as the aim, audience, mode, and persona of written discourse. A deliberate decision not to provide these specifications was made, since for basic writing students such information is likely to produce worse rather than better writing.[2] It should be noted, however, that the rhetorical purposes of all the papers were comparable, and that students were provided with a careful description of what was expected from them on each paper. Nothing gave us any reason to think that these assignment sheets interfered with the students' ability to perform at the full level of their skill on the papers.

In addition, conditions under which the papers were written were essentially identical at all three sites. The papers were all (with the exception of paper #1) written with a 100-minute time limit. Some papers were written in the classroom, under teacher supervision; others (even some papers of students in the control group) were written in the COMP-LAB, under the supervision of lab personnel. In the latter case, students were required to punch in and out on a time clock, to assure that only the allowed 100 minutes were used. All students were permitted to use a dictionary, scratch paper, and grammar materials while writing their papers.

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[2]See William J. McCleary, "A Note on Reliability and Validity Problems in Composition Research," Research in the Teaching of English, 13 (1979), 274-277, especially p. 275, and Michael G. Southwell, "A Note on Specifying the Mode and Aim of Written Discourse for Basic Writing Students," Research in the Teaching of English, forthcoming.

Writing Evaluation Measures. Evaluation of writings was subcontracted by FERA to the Educational Testing Service, of Princeton.

Because the purpose of English 100 was to improve students' writing (in large part, to decrease their rates of error), a count of errors was the most important writing evaluation measure. It could provide objective information on the extent to which students improved this aspect of their writing. Four samples of papers from experimental and control students at all three sites, two written at the beginning and two at the end of the semester (papers #1, #2, #8, and #9), were selected to be read in the error count. Papers #1 and #9 were both written in the argumentative mode, the mode which is most typical of college writing. Papers #2 and #8 were both written in the narrative-expository mode, a mode which seems to encourage the occurrence of errors arising from dialect interference. The use of papers in different modes increased the chances for students to demonstrate whether or not they had control over errors. In drawing the sample of papers for the error count, it was decided not to attempt to pair the students in the pre- and post-test groups. The possibilities for obtaining a representative selection of errors are increased if the papers read are from different students.

A holistic evaluation of student papers supplemented the error count; it was designed to provide information on the extent to which students improved the overall quality of their writing, as well as information on whether the COMP-LAB course's emphasis on

error-correction had an effect (negative or positive) on overall quality. Two samples of papers from experimental and control students at York, one written near the beginning of the semester and the other at the end (papers #3 and #9), were selected to be read holistically. These papers were both written in the argumentative mode. This assured us that raters would be able to use essentially similar criteria in scoring them. A 1-6 rating scale was chosen, to maximize the chances of observing change. To improve the reliability of the score, each paper was scored twice, and discrepancies were resolved by a third reader. No student's paper was included in both the error count and the holistic scoring, even though paper #9 was used in both measures.

It should be emphasized that both these writing evaluation measures were designed to compare the performance of groups of students, not the progress of individual students.

Error count variables. In 1975, the Department of English at York had formulated criteria for the passing of English 100. Those criteria are contained in Table 1 below.

The content of the COMP-LAB course at York had been determined in large part by these criteria; the course was developed to help students to meet the criteria in what was hoped to be a more efficient way. The control teachers at York were, of course, also bound by the same criteria. These criteria are not unrepresentative of the demands made upon students in similar courses at similar institutions. It was therefore assumed that the control teachers and the experimental teachers at all three sites had es-

Table 1

Criteria for Passing English 100 at York College

To students in English 100:

The Department of English has determined that, in order to pass English 100, you must meet the following criteria:

1. The ability to write at least one paragraph which establishes one specific main idea and develops it.

2. Demonstrated control of:
   a. Agreement (subject/verb, noun/pronoun)
   b. Verb forms (regular past tenses and participles; common irregular forms)
   c. Tense consistency
   d. Noun plural forms
   e. Possessive forms
   f. Sentence construction (no run-ons or fragments; few comma splices)

sentially the same general goals in their courses: to prepare students to fulfill criteria like those formulated at York (even though no specific criteria had been in fact defined at Metropolitan or South Central).

The existence of these criteria at York made identification of the variables for the error count easier. The Spring 1978 pilot-test of the error count had provided information about how long counting errors in a paper could be expected to take, and about what degree of accuracy in identifying errors could be expected from raters. After discussions with Evans Alloway of ETS, a list of variables, generalized and simplified from the York departmental criteria, was developed, as follows:

1. verb form errors

2. sentence errors

3. spelling errors (not caused by grammatical inflection)

4. other word form errors (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs)

Given the varying lengths of the student papers, it would be hard to interpret comparisons of gross numbers of errors. It was therefore important to count additional variables in each of the papers, as follows:

1. number of words

2. number of finite verbs[3]

These additional variables would permit the calculation of rates of errors, which would allow a more meaningful comparison of writings of experimental and control students. To have had the ETS raters count these two variables along with the four errors, however, would mean that fewer papers could be counted. It was judged that to have project personnel count these two additional variables would not taint the objectivity of the evaluation, and would permit errors to be counted in more papers by the ETS raters. Accordingly, this procedure was followed.

Writing evaluation procedures. After the list of error-count variables was developed, the Directors provided Alloway with instruction sheets and descriptions and examples of the various errors, all developed after the pilot-test. (Copies of the train-

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[3]This measure is more appropriate than number of T-units for students on this level, since their writing is often characterized by syntactic tangles which increase T-unit length while decreasing sentence quality.

ing materials are included in Appendix D.) The Directors were not present at the actual counting, which took place at the ETS offices, under the supervision of Alloway. It was observed by John Meeker of FERA. Approximately two hours of training took place. It was assumed, then, that the raters had common criteria for counting variables.

ETS's well-developed holistic reading procedures were relied upon to assure that criteria for evaluating the papers holistically were both consistent and consistently applied.

Special writing paper had been provided to all students at all sites, and identification had been removed from all papers before they were read by the ETS raters. There was thus no possibility that the raters could identify, and thus be influenced by, the author, college, group, or time of the writing.

3.3 OTHER EVALUATION MEASURES

It should be emphasized that the entire COMP-LAB course was being evaluated, not just its impact on student writing. To determine whether the whole course could be called successful, many measures beyond simple evaluation of student writings were necessary. The use of a variety of measures improved the validity of the evaluation, by providing a greater opportunity to perceive changes (if any had in fact occurred) for both experimental and control students. This aspect of the evaluation was carried out by FERA personnel.

Student Attitudes. It was important to ascertain students' attitudes both toward writing in general and toward their instruction. This information would permit comparing students' perceptions of the value of their courses. It was particularly important to determine experimental students' attitudes toward the lab practice; if they found it confusing or uncongenial, the course could not be considered a success, whatever the result of the writing evaluation.

Teacher Attitudes. Interviews were designed to elicit information about teachers' goals and procedures in their courses. In part, this could provide assurance that control students were receiving careful and sequenced instruction; it might also reveal something about teachers' satisfaction with their courses. It was essential to examine the attitudes of experimental teachers at the transfer sites toward the COMP-LAB course; as with students, problems in using the course would make it impossible to call the course successful.

Administration Attitudes. The COMP-LAB course represents a radical departure from the traditional teacher-oriented classroom, and this is a potential barrier to the course's success. Further, the lab occasions additional institutional costs (for personnel, equipment, and materials), which might or might not be offset by savings in instructional time. Interviews were designed to find out whether these were in fact problems.

Transferability. The COMP-LAB course had been designed from the very first to be transferable. Even if it were found to be

successful at York, its value would be severely limited if it could be used only there. The attitudes and experiences of experimental teachers at the transfer sites could show whether the training provided to them by the Directors had been sufficient, and whether there had been other, unanticipated problems.

Demographic Data. Correlations might be found between success in the students' courses and traditional demographic information like age, gender, previous college history, etc. But it would be even more important to see what effect the different instructional methods had on pass rates, and to what extent the laboratory practice correlated with pass rates.

Chapter IV

EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 FERA'S FINDINGS

FERA's complete findings are contained in Appendix A. Some aspects of the findings deserve further discussion (FERA's categories will be used).

4.1.1 Who were the students in this study?

FERA's report shows that the percentages of black students and repeaters at York are strikingly higher than at either of the two transfer sites. The noticeable difference in the number of black students in the experimental and control groups at York can probably be accounted for by the fact that the experimental students were predominantly members of the SEEK program (for particularly disadvantaged students). This skewing was caused by the fact that two of the Directors were members of the SEEK Department. All three of the block-scheduled SEEK sections (for students with the most severe and pervasive remedial problems) were experimental sections, as shown in Table 2 below.

These facts raise the possibility that the level of writing in the first developmental course at the two transfer sites might be higher than that at York (see the discussions beginning on pages 41 and 43).

Table 2

Sections of English 100 at York College, Fall 1978

	non-SEEK	SEEK	block SEEK
experimental	2	1	3
control	5	1	
other	4	1	

4.1.2 How does CLC compare with other ways of improving student writing?

a. Student Survey Data. Both experimental and control students expressed strongly positive feelings toward writing, toward their own writing improvement, and toward their courses. Only four questions elicited responses which were different (at a 90% confidence level) for the experimental and control groups:

1. I usually only write when told to by my teacher.
2. The ability to write well helps you get a good job.
3. When I get a writing assignment, I have a pretty good idea of what to do to write a satisfactory paper.
4. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I don't worry so much when I have to write something for school.

Only the third and fourth of these questions seem important. Control students responded more favorably to these two questions; still, somewhat or strongly positive feelings were expressed by 72.1% and 62.2% respectively of experimental students. Given the generally favorable feelings of experimental students, no concern seems warranted about these two isolated responses. In summary,

the traditional course (taught in the classroom) and the COMP-LAB course (taught using the autotutorial writing laboratory) were equally successful in fostering favorable attitudes (insofar as such expressed responses can be trusted).

b. Error Count Data. The most important error-count rates are: number of words per paper, number of verb errors per verb, number of sentence errors per verb, number of spelling errors per word, number of other errors per word, and number of total errors per word. The results of FERA's analysis of the error count[4] for these six variables are summarized in Table 3 below.

It is clear from this analysis that there were no differences between experimental and control students at the beginning of the semester (this is further evidence that the two populations were

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[4]It was found that not all the papers in the error count were in fact written by different students. Because of this, FERA's analysis divided the papers into matched and unmatched samples. For the purposes of this discussion, however, we have decided to lump together all the papers in the four analysis groups: pre-test/post-test, and experimental/control. While such lumping violates the T-test's assumption of independence of samples, there seem to be satisfactory reasons for doing it. For one thing, a comparison of these results with FERA's more cautious results shows no real differences. This may be due to the robustness of the T-test procedure, or it may suggest that the non-independence of the samples is unimportant here. For another, in assessing differences and improvement in error rates, we have decided to run the risk of accepting Type 2 errors, and have accepted confidence levels of 90%. This decision will lead to small discrepancies between this analysis and FERA's, but in comparing the performance of COMP-LAB students to that of non-COMP-LAB students, it has seemed important to accept improvement even if there is some possibility that it is only apparent. In dealing with such crude measurement of gross effects in an extremely complex educational setting, it is nonsensical to worry about extremes of precision in statistical analysis.

Table 3

Differences and Improvement in Error Rates at All Three Sites

	DIFFERENCES pre	DIFFERENCES post	I M P R O V E M E N T experimental	I M P R O V E M E N T control
words			+	+
vb/vb			+	✲
snt/vb		E	+	✲
sp/wd		e	+	+
oth/wd			+	✲
tot/wd		E	+	+

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

E=experimental group better (at 95% confidence level)
e=experimental group better (at 90% confidence level)
+=improvement occurred (at 95% confidence level)
✲=improvement occurred (at 90% confidence level)

essentially identical). At the end of the semester, experimental students performed better than control students in three of the six variables. Further, we can be much more confident that experimental students succeeded in decreasing the rate at which errors occur in their writing, than we can be that control students did.

Results like these are, of course, gratifying. But it is important to consider how much weight can be placed on the results of this error count, and so an examination of the reliability of the ETS raters in the error count was undertaken. Three papers

were chosen at random from among those included in the error count, and ten York College faculty members, experienced in the teaching of basic writing, plus the three Directors, counted occurrences of errors in them, using the ETS error-count categories. The results of this count are contained in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Errors Counted in Preliminary Reliability Study

READER	PAPER	VERBS	SENTENCES	SPELLING	OTHER	TOTAL
A	1	0	3	8	0	11
EKS		4.7	1	8	2.7	16.3
YC		4.5	2.9	8	3.3	18.6
range		0-6	1-7	6-10	0-7	
A	2	1	2	6	1	10
EKS		1.3	1.7	6	2	11
YC		1.3	2.3	6.2	2.3	12.1
range		0-3	1-5	4-8	0-5	
A	3	2	5	11	1	19
EKS		1.7	6	8.7	2.7	19
YC		2.4	6.8	9.3	2.1	20.6
range		1-3	4-9	8-11	1-4	

A=ETS rater
EKS=mean of three Directors
YC=mean of ten York faculty members

An analysis of variance shows that the differences among the 14 readers are not significant for any of the papers, although there are striking differences in both subtotals and totals (particularly for papers #1 and #2). These discrepancies were sufficiently unsettling to justify a more elaborate test.

Accordingly, a sample of 28 more papers (14 high, and 14 low) was drawn, using the following procedure: On the basis of holistic scores, a group of 14 better student writers was identified, and one of each student's papers (a paper which had been included in the error count but not in the holistic scoring) was chosen. Each of these papers was then read holistically, to assure that it was accurate to classify it as a high paper. A set of 14 low papers was similarly selected.

Independently, the three Directors counted errors in each of these 28 papers. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated to indicate the reliability of the ratings among the three Directors, and then between the ETS rater and each of the three Directors, for all 31 papers (including the three in the original random sample), for the 14 high papers, and for the 14 low papers. The actual coefficients are contained in Appendix E; their ranges are shown in Table 5 below.

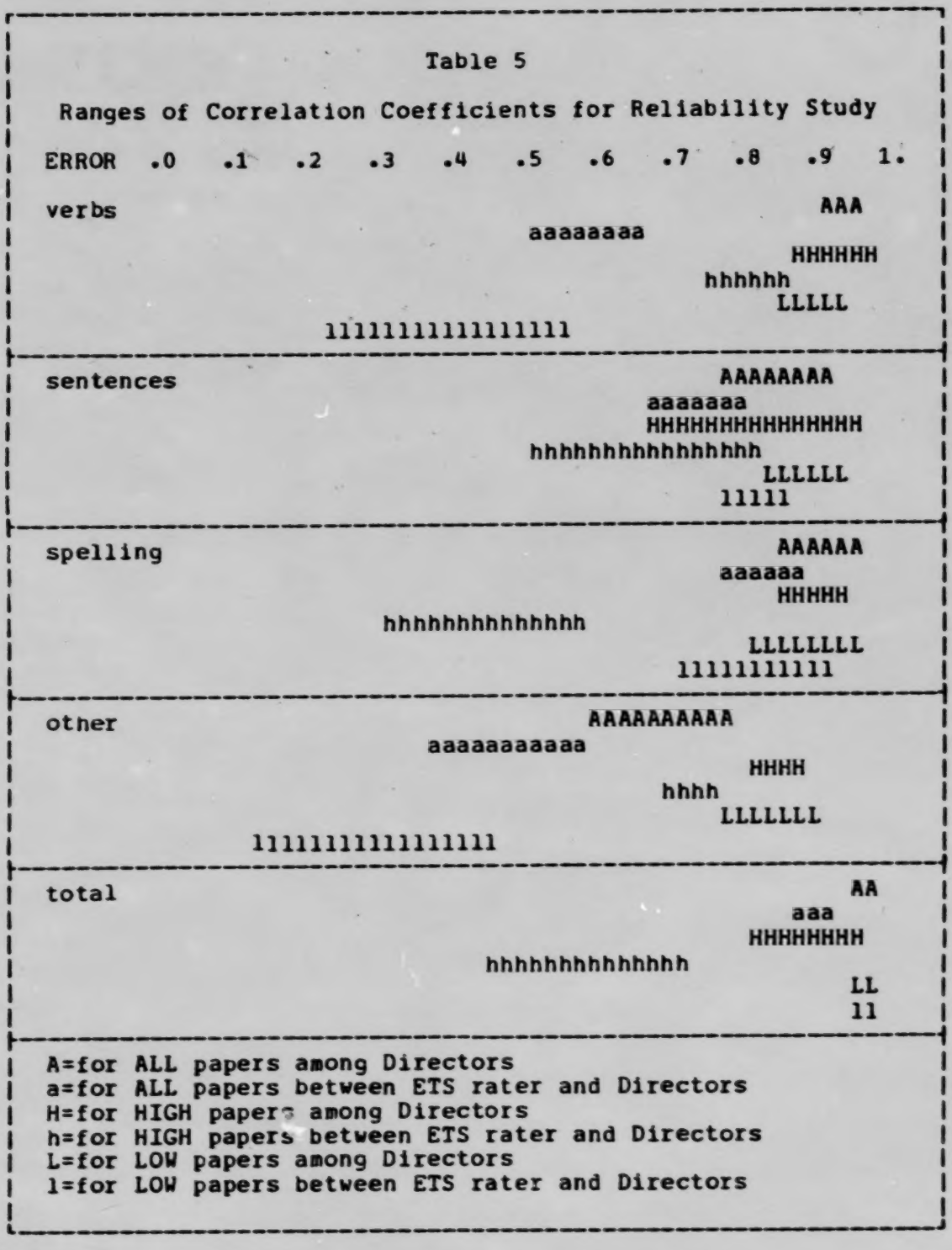
An examination of these coefficients leads to the following conclusions:

1. Correlations among counts by the Directors are extremely high (ranging from .6101 to .9730, with only two out of 45 below .7671). These high correlations are not surprising; a large part of the developmental work on the COMP-LAB Project consisted of just this kind of systematic counting and analysis of errors. These correlations give us confidence that the error counts done by the Directors are essentially accurate, and can therefore be validly used as a check on the counts of the ETS raters.

2. Correlations between the ETS raters and the Directors for total errors for all papers in the sample are sufficiently high to assure us that the ETS raters have indeed found errors when they occur. We can therefore be confident about the accuracy of the counts of total errors.

Table 5

Ranges of Correlation Coefficients for Reliability Study



A=for ALL papers among Directors
a=for ALL papers between ETS rater and Directors
H=for HIGH papers among Directors
h=for HIGH papers between ETS rater and Directors
L=for LOW papers among Directors
l=for LOW papers between ETS rater and Directors

3. We can have much less confidence, however, in the accuracy of the counts of individual errors. This is true predominantly in the low papers, though large discrepancies exist in the high papers as well.

It would seem that the ETS raters, although able to find errors, were much less able to decide into what categories those errors fit. This is hardly surprising, in view of the brevity of the training session. This fact makes it hard, however, to draw any reliable conclusions about changes in the rates of individual kinds of errors.

In any event, the evaluation clearly does suggest that experimental students succeeded as well as control students in improving their error rates; further, we can be more confident for them than for control students that improvement did in fact occur.

c. Holistic Data. If the improvement in error rates just discussed had occurred at the expense of overall writing quality, there would be serious question about whether an instructional method producing results like these could be considered worthwhile. But FERA's analysis of holistic scores (for York College students only) shows that this is not the case. Differences in the scores gained by experimental and control students are striking, as shown in Table 6 below.

Experimental students began at a lower overall level of quality than control students (and this may be accounted for by the nature of the experimental population, as discussed beginning on page 19). But by the end of the semester they were writing at a higher overall level of quality (as indicated by this holistic

Table 6

Mean Holistic Scores at York College

	PAPER #3*	PAPER #9*	IMPROVEMENT
experimental	5.7	7.0	+
control	6.0	6.6	

*=no difference between two groups
+=improvement occurred (at 99.99% confidence level)

measure). Improvement in error rates for experimental students was thus accompanied not by a decline or (as for control students) a stasis, but by an improvement in overall quality. The congruence of these two measures gives us more confidence that improvement did actually occur in the writing of experimental students.

This finding is of particular interest, in view of the widespread prejudice in the profession against instruction in correctness, which is seen as inhibiting rhetorical development. It might be that, as these experimental students felt themselves gaining control over the correctness of their writing, they became more confident about the content of their writing as well, and more ambitious. This hypothesis would be confirmed, not contradicted, by the fact that the experimental students expressed more worry than control students about their writing; usually only those who sense how important and significant an endeavor is, will bother to be concerned about it. All this suggests that

it is quite false to view writing correctness as a trivial matter of mere surface features. Lack of control over correctness induces avoidance strategies, and masks rhetorical capability. It could even inhibit rhetorical growth.

The discrepancy in improvement between experimental and control students is even more striking when only failing students are considered, as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Mean Holistic Scores for Failing Students at York College

	PAPER #3*	PAPER #9**	IMPROVEMENT
experimental	4.8	6.1	+
control	4.7	4.9	

*=no difference between two groups
**=two groups different (at 99% confidence level)
+=improvement occurred (at 99% confidence level)

Even though the students in this group did not succeed in passing the course, the experimental students made striking improvement in the overall quality of their writing. This would seem to suggest that the COMP-LAB course has particular benefits for students whose writing level is low when they enter the course.

Again, however, there is reason for caution. The evaluation of basic writing is at a very primitive stage. ETS has refined

its holistic reading procedures to the point that considerable confidence can be placed on the reliability of its raters' holistic scores. But it is far from clear that such holistic scoring is valid, or even possible, for writings on this level, writings characterized by weird amalgams of rhetorical sophistication and incompetence, of grammatical and syntactic competence and incapability. Sensible and even excellent ideas may be mangled by execrable grammar; what is wrong can easily overwhelm what is right. Raters who do not have extensive experience with this kind of writing may therefore have difficulty in recognizing merits which actually exist in such papers. The low correlations between the ETS raters and the three Directors on the low papers in the error count suggest just such a lack of experience. Further, the value of holistic evaluation for writings of much more ordinary competence has been fully recognized only in the last few years. It would therefore be rash to put too much reliance on the measure in this case.

It is worth noticing that there seems to be little correlation between pass rates, and holistic scores and error rates. Experimental students certainly did better than control students on holistic scores, and did as well (perhaps better) on error rates, but did worse on pass rates. This may be due to the grading tendencies of the Directors (see the discussion beginning on page 33).

4.1.3 How do CLC and control students like their courses?

The COMP-LAB course is a highly-structured one, with a demanding syllabus which does not give students much freedom; it clearly and directly emphasizes the correction of errors in student writing. Student attitudes toward the course show that COMP-LAB students are not deterred or troubled by this emphasis. These students overwhelmingly enjoyed their lab work, and considered it helpful. There therefore seems to be no reason to worry that the course's unabashed emphasis on correction of errors presents any problems to COMP-LAB students.

There is nothing to indicate that any halo effect was operative. Nothing in students' responses suggested that they had any idea that they were participating in an experiment to compare different instructional methods. The instructions for the survey (see the appendix to FERA's report, in Appendix A) in fact implied (as was true) that both the control and the experimental students had been selected for special attention. At York, the evaluation did not take place until the fourth semester of the COMP-LAB's existence, so that the laboratory practice had already become an established mode of instruction. During the previous year, selected students had been interviewed by the Directors after the end of the semester, and no student had ever shown any awareness that the COMP-LAB course was an experimental one.

4.1.4 Do teachers like CLC as well as they like traditional instruction?

Reservations about the value of the COMP-LAB course seem to exist chiefly at the two transfer sites. It should be remembered that the evaluation took place at these two sites in the first semester of the course's existence, and in both cases after initial administrative difficulties. As procedures for running the course have become smoothed, and as teachers have become more experienced with it, these complaints have already diminished. In any case, it should be noted that even in the evaluation semester there was a high level of satisfaction with the course. Statements from other teachers of the course (or users of the lab materials) expressing general satisfaction are contained in Appendix F.

4.1.5 What were the perceptions of the support staff and administration?

The lab supervisors' difficulties with the course are worthy of respect (though it is impossible to tell from FERA's report how widespread these complaints were). In any case, whatever dissatisfaction existed was complemented by an appreciation of the value of the lab component of the course.

Administrators' true attitudes toward the course are perhaps best revealed by the fact that the course has become a permanent part of the curriculum at all three sites. One suspects that this would not have happened if there had been serious administrative objections to it. Certainly an important factor in this

decision has been the flexible scheduling which the course's reduced classroom hours permit. Perhaps their perception of the educational value of the course has had some effect as well. Another factor might have been the costs of the course (see the discussion beginning on page 36).

4.2 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

4.2.1 Other Benefits

In summary, then, the COMP-LAB course seems to offer an effective alternative to traditional classroom instruction. It has proven itself able to improve students' writing, and it does not offer any particular difficulties to either students or teachers. The course may in fact offer some additional, if less tangible, benefits to students. Fairly large percentages of experimental students reported on FERA's survey that the COMP-LAB course had helped them to learn better study habits. Additional research would be required to determine whether the course actually produces better results in other classes. But it is true that the COMP-LAB course had from the beginning been designed in part to help students learn not just how to write more correctly, but also how to learn more efficiently. It seems likely that for many of these academically deprived students the assigned laboratory work (equivalent to a kind of supervised homework) is their first exposure to the fact that in college (unlike high school) it is necessary to do substantial amounts of work outside the classroom. A lesson like this may be even more important for

students' future success in college than improvement in writing ability.

There has been considerable discussion about the effect of students' self-concept on their achievement. According to one theory, the best way to effect achievement is to help students to improve their self-images. It has recently been argued that the opposite may be true, that increased achievement is instrumental in improving self-concept. In this case, providing a setting which fosters achievement could improve self-image. The COMP-LAB project may provide some support for this theory. The course puts students into a highly-structured environment with very little freedom, but with a clear and systematic approach to frequently-measured goals. It seems likely that some of the success of the course can be attributed to this support system. The evaluation contained no direct examination of students' self-concept, but this would be an important area for future research.

4.2.2 Pass Rates

For college students, pass rates are perhaps the most valid measure of accomplishment in a course. Decisions about whether a student passes or fails a course are seldom made on the basis of contracted counting of errors in a relatively small sample of a student's papers; rather, they are usually made on the basis of a teacher's informed judgment about the overall quality of all of a student's writing. If the goal of a writing course is to prepare students to go on to more advanced college courses, then in one

sense the only appropriate measure of success is the extent to which those students do in fact go on. For the Fall 1978 semester, there were no significant differences in pass rates between experimental and control students at any of the three sites, as shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Pass Rates at All Three Sites

		PASS	FAIL/STOP
3	experimental	140=57.6%	103=42.4%
	control	129=64.8%	70=35.2%
	chisquare=2.388; P=.878		
Y	experimental	57=46.7%	65=53.3%
	control	70=56.5%	54=43.7%
	chisquare=4.401; P=.889		
M	experimental	32=80.0%	8=20.0%
	control	24=75.0%	8=25.0%
	chisquare=2.571; P=.724		
S	experimental	51=52.6%	46=47.4%
	control	35=70.0%	15=30.0%
	chisquare=4.689; P=.904		

3=at all three sites
Y=York College
M=Metropolitan Community College
S=South Central Community College

It is important to put pass rates of COMP-LAB students in the context of historical pass rates for such students. Data does not exist for students at Metropolitan and South Central, but

pass rates for students at York in various categories for various periods are shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Pass Rates for Sections of English 100 at York College

PERIOD	ALL	NON-COMP-LAB	CONTROL	EXPERIMENTAL	EKS
F74-S77	53.1	53.1			45.7
F77-S79	55.9	58.0		51.0	49.0
F78	52.0	56.2	60.0	46.3	46.7

EKS=for course taught by the Directors

F74-S77=prior to project period
F77-S79=project period
F78=evaluation semester

It is clear from these figures[5] that Epes, Kirkpatrick, and Southwell have always tended to pass fewer students than other York College faculty members do. The lower pass rate for experimental students at York can be accounted for in part by this tendency of the Directors to pass fewer students, and in part by the fact that the experimental students were predominantly members of the SEEK program, for particularly disadvantaged students (see the discussion beginning on page 51).

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[5]Slight discrepancies between this table and the previous one are caused by the inclusion of more up-to-date figures for the Fall 1978 semester in this one.

It should be noted that the Directors failed students with mean holistic scores significantly higher than those of the control students who failed (see Table 7 on page 28). A possible explanation for this is that COMP-LAB course procedures (like systematic marking of errors in student papers) have helped us to be objective about students' actual writing performance.

The lower pass rate for experimental students at South Central can perhaps be accounted for in part by the fact that the experimental teacher was replaced several weeks into the semester by other teachers to whom the Directors were unable to give the same kind of training. There is in any case no statistical significance to the differences in pass rates for experimental and control students at any of the three sites, or for all three sites combined. Discrepancies in pass rates can therefore not be used to draw any conclusions about the relative merits of the COMP-LAB and non-COMP-LAB courses.

4.2.3 Costs of the COMP-LAB Course at York College

An analysis of the direct costs of the COMP-LAB course at York during the Fall 1978 semester is contained in Table 10 below.

These figures show that replacement of the traditional five-hour classroom format by the two-hour COMP-LAB format for six sections of English 100 effected a savings of approximately $7,500, or about 20% over the expected cost. It should be noted that the COMP-LAB students' 60% reduction in teacher contact time did not come at the expense of the quality of the education pro-

Table 10

Costs of English 100 at York College, Fall 1978

		TRAD	C-L
FACULTY			
average salary (24 hours)	23,000		
benefits	6,210		
TOTAL	29,210		
6 sections		36,513	14,605
LAB SUPERVISORS			
salary	12,000		
benefits	2,400		
TOTAL	14,400		14,400
TOTAL		36,513	29,005
DIFFERENCE		7,508	

TRAD=traditional classroom format, @ 5 hours/section
C-L=COMP-LAB format, @ 2 hours/section

NOTE: Figures are approximate. Student aide costs would have been incurred even if the COMP-LAB were not in existence; they are therefore not included here. Nor are expenses for equipping the lab, or for producing materials (which are sold to students at cost).

vided to them, as measured by pass rates, error rates, and holistic scores on writings.

But so drastic a reduction in classroom time was never intended as more than an experiment. For teachers whose course load typically consists of 12 teaching hours, to award only two hours' credit for one section of English 100 would make the burden of teaching the course quite impossible. A more realistic view of direct expenses associated with the COMP-LAB course can

be gained by analyzing costs of teaching 21 sections of English 100 on a 4-hour COMP-LAB format at York in 1979-80, as shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11

Costs of English 100 at York College, 1979-80

		TRAD	C-L
FACULTY			
average salary (24 hours)	23,000		
benefits	6,210		
TOTAL	29,210		
21 sections		127,794	102,235
LAB SUPERVISORS			
salary #1	15,900		
salary #2	6,000		
benefits	4,380		
TOTAL	26,280		26,280
TOTAL		127,794	128,515
DIFFERENCE		721	

TRAD=traditional classroom format, @ 5 hours/section
C-L=COMP-LAB format, @ 4 hours/section

These figures show that replacement of the traditional five-hour classroom format by the four-hour COMP-LAB format at York in 1979-80 has incurred an additional cost of well under $1,000, or less than 1%. In fact, increasing the number of sections by only one (to 22) would have saved more than enough money to make up completely for the additional cost of the lab personnel. And the

value of services provided to drop-in students who are not taking English 100 has not been considered in these calculations.

It remains to be seen what effect on student learning the increase in contact time for the COMP-LAB course from two hours to four will have; one would expect the effect to be positive. If it is realized, this advantage might be considered worth any slight additional expense. A longer-range study of the effects of the COMP-LAB course on retention of students in college, and on grade point averages, might produce other as yet unknown benefits of the COMP-LAB course. Preliminary planning is now underway for such a study.

4.2.4 Transfer Sites

Special attention needs to be given to the success of the course at the transfer sites.

As previously noted, the evaluation took place in the first semester of the installation of the COMP-LAB course at the transfer sites. To evaluate so new a program obviously risks obtaining negative results. But the entire previous year of development at York had been seen as a formative year, at the end of which both course management procedures and transfer procedures had been refined. The course had been developed to be transferable, and it was therefore appropriate to test its transferabilty under difficult conditions. Further, no college is able or willing to provide an experimental program with an extended trial period; either a new program can be installed satisfactorily, or it

can't. There was therefore good reason to evaluate the course under first-semester conditions.

An unanticipated administrative problem at the transfer sites was that both teachers originally assigned to the COMP-LAB course had to be replaced, one (due to illness) before the training period, and the other after. Though these were hardly the most satisfactory conditions under which to evaluate an experimental program, they did at least provide the most severe possible test. If the course could be successful under such conditions, it was likely to succeed under more normal and favorable conditions.

4.2.4.1 Metropolitan Community College

In addition to the general problems just discussed, there were four potential problems in transferring the COMP-LAB course to Metropolitan:

1. The syllabus for the COMP-LAB course had been developed for York's 14-week calendar; Metropolitan's 12-week calendar therefore presented an immediate challenge.

2. The Directors had some fears that the materials might not be appropriate for the rather different student body at Metropolitan. There were two important differences between the Metropolitan students and those at York (for whom the course had originally been intended): a much larger proportion of the Metropolitan students was white, and few students had previously failed the course.

3. The Metropolitan teachers were experienced, and could be expected to have relatively well-developed teaching philosophies; they might therefore be resistant to so complete and systematic a course.

4. Pass rates at Metropolitan are extremely high (the college does not even distinguish a failing grade from a stopping grade). Given this fact, error rates become particularly important for determining to what extent progress has occurred.

The results of the evaluation at Metropolitan do not show that these problems had any effect on the overall evaluation results. By doubling-up lab assignments, it proved possible to cover the same material as at the other sites. Neither the experimental teachers nor the students expressed any particular difficulty with the course. This suggests that the lab materials were in fact suitable for the Metropolitan students, even though the error count analysis showed that they were considerably better at writing correctly than the York students. These differences are shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12

Differences between Metropolitan and York Students in Errors

	PRE-TEST TIME		POST-TEST TIME	
	experimental	control	experimental	control
words	M		M	M
vb/vb	M	M	M	M
snt/vb			M	
sp/wd	M	M		
oth/wd	m		M	m
tot/wd	M	m	M	M

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

M=Metropolitan students better (at 95% confidence level)
m=Metropolitan students better (at 90% confidence level)

Metropolitan's error count results are not very different from the overall error count results, as shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13

Error Rates at Metropolitan Community College

	DIFFERENCES pre	DIFFERENCES post	I M P R O V E M E N T experimental	I M P R O V E M E N T control
words	E		+	+
vb/vb			+	+
snt/vb			+	✲
sp/wd				
oth/wd		E		+
tot/wd			+	✲

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

E=experimental group better (at 95% confidence level)
+=improvement occurred (at 95% confidence level)
✲=improvement occurred (at 90% confidence level)

It has been suggested by project personnel at Metropolitan that retention in COMP-LAB sections of the course was higher than that in non-COMP-LAB sections, but there is insufficient data to be able to determine whether or not this is the case.

It seems, then, that the COMP-LAB course does offer Metropolitan a course which is at least as effective as the traditional one in improving students' writing.

4.2.4.2 South Central Community College

There were two potential problems in transferring the COMP-LAB course to South Central:

1. The college was in the midst of a period of transition, from an evening college for part-time students, to a college for full-time students. Associated with this transition was considerable administrative and faculty turnover.

2. Since the faculty was therefore relatively new and inexperienced, there was a possibility that it would prove difficult for the teachers to use a course so rigorously structured as the COMP-LAB course.

The college's administrative difficulties did indeed have an effect on the evaluation: it proved impossible to collect pre-test papers from the experimental students; one replacement experimental teacher was not interviewed; and no administrator was interviewed. Nevertheless, considerable data was collected, and again nothing suggests any particular difficulties with the COMP-LAB course.

The error count makes it clear that South Central's students were much more like the York students than Metropolitan's, as shown in Table 14 below.

The lack of pre-test error counts for experimental students at South Central makes it impossible to say whether the error count results are typical of the overall results, as shown in Table 15 below.

The equivalent pass rates for experimental and control students (see the discussion beginning on page 33) suggest that there were no great differences between the two groups. Further,

Table 14

Differences between South Central and York Students in Errors

	PRE-TEST TIME		POST-TEST TIME	
	experimental	control	experimental	control
words	0		Y	Y
vb/vb	0			S
snt/vb	0		S	
sp/wd	0			
oth/wd	0	S		S
tot/wd	0			

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

S=South Central students better (at 95% confidence level)
Y=York students better (at 95% confidence level)
0=data missing

it is important to notice that the COMP-LAB course was immediately adopted at South Central as the standard remedial course; beginning in the very next semester, only courses on the COMP-LAB model were offered to students on this level. It may not be possible to say that this adoption was the result of a perception of the COMP-LAB course's merits, but surely it would not have happened if the course had been seen as distinctly unsuccessful.

Table 15

Error Rates at South Central Community College

	DIFFERENCES pre	post	I M P R O V E M E N T experimental	control
words	0		0	
vb/vb	0	C	0	+
snt/vb	0	E	0	
sp/wd	0		0	
oth/wd	0	C	0	
tot/wd	0		0	

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

E=experimental group better (at 95% confidence level)
C=control group better (at 95% confidence level)
+=improvement occurred (at 95% confidence level)
0=data missing

4.2.4.3 Transferability

These results suggest that it is indeed possible to transfer the course. Despite administrative difficulties at both sites (mild at one, but severe at the other), the course was taught, its students did learn, and neither students nor teachers expressed particular problems with it. Administrators perceived the course as successful enough that, even before any results from this evaluation could become known, other sections began using the COMP-LAB model. These are truly important results, for they show that the course can be instituted at other colleges

with a minimum of preparation, and that it can then be expected to function efficiently.

4.2.5 York College

The COMP-LAB course had been first developed at York College, to meet the needs of York students. When the evaluation took place in Fall 1978, the course had already gone through three semesters of development and formative evaluation. York can therefore be considered a normative site for the course; it existed there in its most highly-developed and closely-supervised form. On the other hand, the control population at York had some advantages which were not possessed (or were possessed to a much lesser extent) by control students at the two transfer sites:

1. A variety of supplementary remedial services was available, including a Writing Skills Center, with one-on-one tutorial assistance provided by CETAs and students.

2. The control teachers may have had more experience in teaching students on this level than those at the other sites.

3. The control students' advantage in teacher contact time was greater at York than at the other sites, as shown in Table 16 below.

Once again, there are no particular differences between the results at York and those overall. Attitudes of experimental students toward the course were favorable. The results of the error analysis were generally consistent with the overall error results, as shown in Table 17 below.

It should be noted, however, that differences between experimental and control students in error rates were greater at York

Table 16

Teacher Contact Time for English 100 at York College

	TRAD	C-L	REDUCTION
York	5	2	3=60%
Metropolitan	4	2	2=50%
South Central	3	2	1=33%

TRAD=traditional classroom format
C-L=COMP-LAB format

than at the other sites. Although control students were better in three out of the six variables (and equivalent in the other three) at the beginning of the semester, by the end experimental students were better in three (and equivalent in the other three). Further, experimental students improved in all six variables, while control students improved in only two. Taken together with the holistic scores (see the discussion beginning on page 26), these results provide dramatic evidence of the COMP-LAB course's success at York.

4.2.5.1 Laboratory Statistics

The exercises (presently) consist of 12 modules, or sets of exercises, each focusing on a single writing problem. Students are assigned to spend however much time is necessary in the COMP-LAB to finish approximately one module a week. An analysis of the amount of work required of students by the COMP-LAB course is appropriate here.

Table 17

Error Rates at York College

	DIFFERENCES pre	DIFFERENCES post	I M P R O V E M E N T experimental	I M P R O V E M E N T control
words	C		+	
vb/vb	c		+	
snt/vb	c		+	
sp/wd		E	+	+
oth/wd		e	+	
tot/wd		E	+	+

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

E=experimental group better (at 95% confidence level)
C=control group better (at 95% confidence level)
e=experimental group better (at 90% confidence level)
c=control group better (at 90% confidence level)
+=improvement occurred (at 95% confidence level)

Time. The number of hours spent working in the COMP-LAB for various periods of time, and the significance of the correlation between lab hours and grades, are shown in Table 18 below.

This table shows that there is only a very weak correlation between the number of hours spent in the lab by students and the grades received. As might be expected, passing students tended to spend more time in the lab than failing students. But some failing students spent large amounts of time in the lab and still did not pass; this is presumably due to such factors as the stu-

Table 18

Hours Spent in COMP-LAB at York College

SEMESTER	ALL	PASS	FAIL	P
S78 minimum	0	0	1	
mean	38.8	48.1	46.6	.9999
maximum	113	113	100	
F78 minimum	3.2	11.4	3.2	
mean	49.6	53.9	45.6	.9276
maximum	100.3	94	100.3	
S79 minimum	0	0	8.2	
mean	40.9	42.3	43.3	.8607
maximum	98.6	98.6	76	

ALL=for all students
PASS=for passing students
FAIL=for failing students
P=confidence level for correlation between hours and pass/fail

S78=for Spring 1978 semester
F78=for Fall 1978 (evaluation) semester
S79=for Spring 1979 semester

dents' initial level of writing, the slowness with which they did the lab work, and their difficulty in carrying over what they had learned in the lab to their papers.

The average number of hours spent per week in the lab was around four, but ranged occasionally up to almost ten. If the lab work is thought of as supervised homework, certainly the course makes modest demands on students. The course's success is not therefore a result of extreme or excessive demands on students' time.

Modules. The number of modules actually done during various semesters, and the significance of the correlation between modules done and grades, are shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19

Mean Modules Completed at York College

	ASSIGNED	ALL	PASS	FAIL	P
S78	13	7.7	10.3	8.2	.9999
F78	13	10.4	11.0	9.8	.9963
S79	11	8.0	8.3	9.5	.9933

ALL=for all students
PASS=for passing students
FAIL=for failing students
P=confidence level for correlation between modules and pass/fail

S78=for Spring 1978 semester
F78=for Fall 1978 (evaluation) semester
S79=for Spring 1979 semester

This table shows that there is a very strong correlation between the number of modules done by students and the grade received, a fact which suggests that the modules do indeed help students to pass the course. Passing students usually (but not always) did more modules than failing students. The failure of some students to pass the course after doing the modules is probably due chiefly to the severity of their writing problems; more than one semester would be required to improve these students' writing to the point where they would be ready to go on to the

next course. It should be remembered that the holistic scores showed that these students improved the overall quality of their writing remarkably, despite failing; and it is not unreasonable to think that the modules may have been helpful in this.

4.2.5.2 Effect of COMP-LAB Course on SEEK Students at York

In 1966, New York State established a program called Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK), which has been the principal agency for providing financial, counseling, and academic support to seriously underprepared students at CUNY. SEEK is typically a separate academic department within a college, with its own faculty, its own counselors, its own developmental courses, and (until recently) its own funding. Students must demonstrate financial and educational hardship in order to qualify for SEEK. They are thus typically students with severe academic problems. SEEK students with the most severe and pervasive problems (in writing, reading, and mathematics) are (at York) block-scheduled into their courses.

Many of the students in COMP-LAB sections of English 100 have been SEEK students, since two of the Directors are members of the SEEK Department. Students with problems like these are the students for whom the COMP-LAB course was developed, and so it has been important to examine what effect the course has had on this particularly deprived group of students. Pass rates for SEEK and non-SEEK students in both COMP-LAB and non-COMP-LAB courses for various periods are shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20

Pass Rates by SEEK

PERIOD	S E E K		B L O C K		N O T	
	cl	trad	cl	trad	cl	trad
F77-S79	35=	107=	69=	14=	93=	387=
	45.5%	57.2%	52.3%	51.9%	52.5%	58.5%
F78	8=	25=	31=	14=	*	90=
	44.4%	58.3%	45.5%	47.7%		55.9%

SEEK=SEEK students
BLOCK=block-scheduled SEEK students
NOT=non-SEEK students

cl=COMP-LAB format
trad=traditional classroom format

*=no sections

F77-S79=project period
F78=evaluation semester

It should be noticed that in several cases these numbers are too small to permit much confidence in drawing conclusions from them. The table shows that, for every category except one (block-scheduled SEEK students for the period Fall 1977 to Spring 1979), non-COMP-LAB students passed at a higher rate than COMP-LAB students. As has been discussed, this is probably a result of the grading practice of the Directors. But it is instructive to examine the performance of block-scheduled SEEK students; over the whole experimental period, and for a larger number of students, experimental block-scheduled SEEK students passed at a higher rate than similar non-COMP-LAB students, though the dif-

ference is very small. This may suggest that the COMP-LAB course is beneficial for students with problems of this kind and severity. An examination of pass rates for the three categories of COMP-LAB students may provide some confirmation: the block-scheduled students, although presumably more needy than the regular SEEK students, passed at a higher rate, and even approached the performance of the non-SEEK students. Again, the implication is that the course is valuable for particularly needy students like these.

This tentative conclusion receives some support from an examination of error rates for experimental students, as shown in Table 21 below.

This table shows that error rates for SEEK and non-SEEK students were not very different at either the beginning or the end of the semester. The SEEK students, in regard to this one aspect of writing, seem to be only slightly more needy than the non-SEEK students. It can also be seen that SEEK students succeeded about as well as non-SEEK students in improving their rates of errors (it was not possible to compare holistic scores). Though there may be no striking differences between SEEK and non-SEEK students, then, it can certainly be said that the COMP-LAB course is as effective for SEEK students as for others, and it may be more effective than the traditional course. Colleges with students like these, but no established curriculum for dealing with their problems, thus have in the COMP-LAB course an opportunity to institute a course which has been shown to be both effective and transferable.

Table 21

Differences and Improvement in Error Rates by SEEK

	DIFFERENCES pre	DIFFERENCES post	IMPROVEMENT SEEK	IMPROVEMENT non-SEEK
words			+	+
vb/vb		N	✲	+
snt/vb	n		+	
sp/wd	n		+	+
oth/wd				✲
tot/wd		n	+	+

words=mean words per paper
vb/vb=mean verb errors per finite verb
snt/vb=mean sentence errors per finite verb
sp/wd=mean spelling errors per word
oth/wd=mean other errors per word
tot/wd=mean total errors per word

N=non-SEEK group better (at 95% confidence level)
n=non-SEEK group better (at 90% confidence level)
+=improvement occurred (at 95% confidence level)
✲=improvement occurred (at 90% confidence level)

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this evaluation, it would seem possible to conclude that the COMP-LAB course is superior to the traditional course, especially in improving student writing. But the cautions voiced above about the reliability and validity of the writing evaluation measures prevent so definite a conclusion. It does seem safe, however, to conclude that the COMP-LAB course is at least as effective as the traditional one. And in view of the reduction in teacher contact time (of up to 60%), this is a highly favorable finding.

There is considerable other evidence for the success of the course. It has become a permanent part of the curriculum at all three sites. At York, 21 out of 27 sections of English 100 offered during the 1979-80 academic year are on the COMP-LAB model. At Metropolitan, the intention exists to replace the existing course with the COMP-LAB course, although a complete change-over will probably be a matter of several years. And at South Central, the COMP-LAB course has completely replaced earlier versions of the first-level composition course. In addition, the course (in whole or in part) has been instituted at three other colleges: Malcolm-King College Extension in New York, Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, and New York Polytechnic

Institute in New York. Over 800 students used the COMP-LAB course during the project period, 1977-79. Twelve reports about the project have been produced. The Directors have made a total of 30 presentations about the project or aspects of it. Visitors to the COMP-LAB, and inquiries about the course or the laboratory, number over 100, as of the writing of this report.

As more nontraditional students with severe writing problems enter college, more colleges will be looking for writing programs which can meet these students' needs. It is therefore important that a tested, flexible, transferable, and potentially cost-effective program like the COMP-LAB basic writing course is available to such institutions.

Appendix A

FERA'S REPORT

Formative Evaluation Research Associates

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THE FINAL REPORT:
AN EVALUATION OF THE COMP-LAB COURSE

By
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CHAPTER I: A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE COMP LAB COURSE

Introduction

The debate about the decline of good writing skills has been tied to open admissions policies for "disadvantaged" students, or the leniency of open classrooms, or students' preference for television rather than books and other written material. Whatever the cause, the end result is clear: be it at Harvard or the local community college, many students' writing skills need improvement. The focus of this paper is not to debate or explain this point. The problem is a given. This study will examine one solution to the problem as it relates to basic writing skills instruction at the college level.

The Comp Lab Course (CLC) was designed to serve the needs of the students at York College in Jamaica, New York. York is an urban school, part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system. It exists on a financial and political tightrope and serves a large, but not exclusively, minority population, many of whom typify the chaos, hope, diversity, poverty, and illiteracy that exists in New York.

York College made a commitment to teach developmental or basic writing in the late 1960's. CLC evolved as a single strategy that was based on the variety of approaches used by its designers, Drs. Mary Epes, Carolyn Kirkpatrick, and Michael Southwell. Specifically, CLC was developed to teach basic writing in a more effective and less costly way.

Offered since Spring 1977, CLC involves an autotutorial lab system that complements classroom teaching. Pattern practice, controlled composition, sentence combining, and free writing are all elements of the lab and classroom experiences. Students meet for two hours a week

with their professor in a typical classroom setting. In addition, it is expected that students spend at least three hours per week in the lab listening to tapes, completing modules, and correcting modules, with access to student tutors and lab supervisors. Students can work through the modules at their own pace, focusing on sentence patterns, grammar, and punctuation. Classroom work pays more attention to issues of style, organization, and composition of essays. The two parts of the course are integrated and reciprocal. In this system, less time is spent with the faculty person, but students can spend more time on course activities than five hours per week if they choose.

After their years of work with CLC, its designers sought to evaluate its impact. Funded by the EXXON Education Foundation, the evaluation addressed three important questions: Does CLC have impact on students' writing performance and on their attitudes toward writing? Is it a transferable pedagogy? Is it better and cheaper than other approaches? To answer these questions, an evaluation design was created which used control and experimental (CLC) sections at the three schools: York College, Metropolitan Community College in Minneapolis, and South Central Community College in New Haven. Analysis was based on student writing samples, attitude surveys, and interviews with students, faculty, and staff.

Review of Findings

In order to highlight results of the study, we present some of the major findings below. We encourage a review of the entire report so that the reader will understand the limitations of the evaluation and, therefore, the context in which our findings occur.

1. In both experimental and control groups, a positive change in

students' writing sample scores was found. However, there was more positive change in the CLC sections than in the control sections.

2. The Comp-Lab Course helps students' writing at least as well as the other instructional approaches in our study, and it involves fewer teacher contact hours, and hence may have lower instructional costs.
3. CLC is a methodology that other instructors, not just its designers, found useful.
4. Although CLC sections have less teacher contact, this does not seem to matter to students because:
    a. The lab serves as a good support group, with students acting as peer teachers for each other and with lab supervisors giving individual attention.
    b. The low level technology in the lab (tape recorders) does not seem to threaten students the way a computer might.
5. In general, CLC students and faculty appreciate the structure of the Comp-Lab course with its integrated lab because of the one-to-one contact and the self-paced coverage of the grammar.
6. The control sections also accomplished much and appeared to have slightly more effect on decreasing or not increasing students' anxieties about writing.

The text of this report explains these and many other findings. Chapter II details the methodology and research design of this study. Chapter III examines the data, exploring the major conclusions of the evaluation. The conclusions and implications of the study are presented

in Chapter IV. The Appendices of the report contain samples of all instruments and additional tables of data. The reader is encouraged to turn to the Appendices as suggested by the text.

In addition to presenting the study's methodology and describing the CLC and the three test sites, the text will discuss the previous findings and their implications. With some limitations, we can say that the CLC has a positive effect; it is transferable; and it may be both less expensive and as effective as some other instructional alternatives. Therefore, our findings have answered the major questions of the study.

CHAPTER II: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter provides a chronological description of the project's development and the services performed by FERA along with an explanation of the design. Sections of this chapter will discuss: 1) the background of the research design, 2) site characteristics, 3) design and analysis, 4) reporting and 5) limitations of this study. The project's life span extended from November 1978 to October 1979. Five types of data collection were employed: observation, face to face interviews, attitudinal surveys, reviews of in-school records and program documents, and writing sample scorings. Students began their classes in the fall of 1978 and finished by mid-December or early January of 1979. Figure 1 presents a chronological overview of FERA's research activities.

FIGURE 1
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

MONTH	DESIGN	STUDENT/FACULTY/ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS	ANALYSIS	REPORTING
November/ December 1978	Ann Arbor planning meeting	South Central (Dec. 4-6) Metropolitan (Dec. 2-6)		
January 1979		York (Jan. 2-4)		
February 1979			Survey coding	
March 1979				
April 1979				
May 1979			Paper scoring by ETS	
June 1979				Ann Arbor meeting with EKS to present findings
July 1979				
August 1979			Additional and extensive data analysis	
October 1979				Final report

Background on Research Design and Methodology

The early design of the Comp Lab evaluation had been undertaken by another evaluator. In the summer and fall of 1978, site selection, pre-test measures, and early data collection were completed by that person. At this point, FERA was contacted to perform the remaining evaluation activities. With less than three weeks notice, FERA reviewed the prior evaluation plans with Professors Epes, Kirkpatrick, and Southwell, made some adjustments, designed interview and survey questionnaires, and made the first set of campus visits. Copies of all instruments are included in the appendices.

The study attempted to incorporate both experimental and control groups at each test site. Program supplies and software had been delivered to the two sites, Metropolitan Community College (Minneapolis) and South Central Community College (New Haven) in the summer of 1978, and the experimental faculty received instruction in the goals and implementation of Comp Lab. The York program developers (EKS)* had carefully prepared these materials for transference, since one of their goals for the evaluation was to assess the efficacy of the program at schools other than York College.

Prior to FERA's involvement with the project, EKS had selected Metropolitan and South Central Community Colleges to serve as test sites. It was our understanding that these two schools had student

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*Professors Epes, Kirkpatrick and Southwell will be referenced as "EKS" in this report.

populations somewhat similar to York's, i.e., sizeable groups of students in need of basic skills instruction. Further, representatives from each of these schools had heard a conference presentation by EKS describing CLC and had subsequently contacted the York designers for more information about CLC. Impressed with the documents they received, David Hanson from Metropolitan and Barbara Shollar from South Central expressed their interest in being considered as a CLC test site if that opportunity ever arose. Shortly after, Metro and South Central were selected because of the similarity in student populations between the three schools and because they were ready to begin the project without delay. This decision was made by EKS prior to the hiring of an evaluator.

Site Characteristics

With the site visits, FERA soon observed that the schools had much in common as well as many differences. Briefly, some of the major characteristics of the three campuses are displayed in Figure 2 (page 8).

We noted other similarities between the schools, such as: all were publicly funded, all had additional services available to students in need of basic skills assistance, and all were serving multi-ethnic populations to various degrees. On the other hand, some important differences were apparent. At Metro, CLC was enthusiastically received by the department and college administration whereas at South Central the program was only part of a larger package of remedial services which had just begun to establish its legitimacy within its institution. York seemed to face the biggest challenges in terms of having the largest numbers of students

FIGURE 2
SITE CHARACTERISTICS

	YORK	METROPOLITAN	SOUTH CENTRAL
Student Characteristics	-Many non-English speakers -Multi-ethnic -Wide age range	-Mostly white -All English speaking	-Mostly Black
Size	-3800	-1800 (1300 FTE)	-1500 FTE
Physical Setting	-Converted warehouse and office buildings -No central campus	-New Central campus downtown	-New campus city outskirts
Faculty Characteristics	-All Faculty experienced teachers of Basic Skills -Little Faculty turnover	-Experienced teachers of Basic Skills, CLC teacher especially -Little Faculty turnover	-Inexperienced in Basic Skills teaching -High Faculty turnover
Student:Faculty Ratio in Basic writing	-25:1	-20:1	-25:1
# Students in Study Sample	-Total=233 -Interviewed=26	-Total=57 -Interviewed=11	-Total=94 -Interviewed=7
Faculty in Study Sample	-Experimental: Drs. Epes, Kirkpatrick, Papchristou, and Southwell -Control: Drs. Baum, Feldstein, Lord, Price, and Ryley	-Experimental: Dr. Kimbrough -Control: Dr. Storlie	-Experimental: Drs. Flannelly and Burow -Control: Drs. Burow Yearwood
Length of Term	-14 weeks	-12 weeks	-14 weeks

in need of basic skills instruction and the most severe economic constraints both within the school and within its community setting. In both the experimental and control sections, York also had the most experienced faculty to teach basic skills writing.

Design and Analysis

Analysis was complex because of the multiple data sources and the rationale behind the design of the study. The following figure presents an overview of the design and analysis:

FIGURE 3
RESEARCH OVERVIEW

PARTICIPANTS	DATA SOURCES	ANALYSIS
Students Experimental Control	-Selected Interviews -Attitudinal Surveys -Writing Samples	-Writing Samples: a. Holistic Scoring b. Error Counts
Faculty Experimental Control	-Interviews	-Attitudinal Surveys: a. Computer Scoring b. Statistical Analysis
Administration Experimental Control	-Interviews	-Interviews: Codes developed from responses

The interviews and attitudinal surveys were done in the last weeks of the fall semester, 1978, while the writing samples were collected throughout the term.

The evaluation procedure and analytic techniques to be used were initially developed by Drs. Epes, Kirkpatrick and Southwell with the first evaluator and were to be as controlled and systematic as possible. Students

could not be randomly selected and assigned to control and experimental sections, but it was judged that normal registration procedures would accomplish much the same purpose. Teachers of control and experimental groups assigned the same number of papers in the term, with the same prescribed topics.

The study included a careful planning of paper topics in a cross-over manner; thus, half of the experimental and control sections wrote on one set of topics early in the semester and another one later, while the other half reversed the order. For this project, experimental students were divided randomly into groups A and B with six teaching sections in each group. The control group was similarly divided randomly into group C and group D again with six sections per group.

Group A (experimental) and group C (Control) were combined into Group I each containing six Experimental and six Control sections. Groups B and D were combined into Group II, again containing six Experimental sections and six Control sections.

During the semester, six writing assignments were designed. The six topics were:

A. No one should be allowed to marry before age 25.

B. Families should be limited to two children.

C. Explain an enjoyable childhood experience.

D. Explain an experience that has influenced you greatly.

E. Too much money is worse than too little money.

F. Women and men are now being treated equally.

Topics A, B, E, and F were to be argued. Topics C and D were descriptive.

For the crossover design, topics A-F were assigned as follows:

Paper	GROUP I (Experimental group A) (Control group C)	GROUP II (Experimental group B) (Control group D)	
1	Topic A	Topic B	
2	Topic C	Topic D	Pre-test tasks
3	Topic E	Topic F	
4			
5			
6			
7	Topic B	Topic A	
8	Topic D	Topic C	Post-test tasks
9	Topic F	Topic E	

In this way, all students wrote on all topics, with both argumentative and descriptive subjects at the start and the end of term. This classic design was thought to be the most stringent possible.

The comparison groups cannot be called control groups in the strictest sense. Students in the comparison groups often had access to lab settings and other one-to one tutoring, although the CLC format was not used. At one school, the same teacher taught both CLC and control sections. Despite these constraints, it was felt that "control" sections were valid for comparison purposes because student backgrounds, ages, and ability levels were generally similar, and group selection was made on a random basis.

In early 1979, the surveys from both student groups at the three sites were coded and initial analyses were made. As we reviewed the data, we saw that there were few differences in the attitudes of control and experimental students, and there were no notable background differences between the groups at each site. During this time, we received the in-school information requested from the sites, including final grades and the number of hours spent in the lab. Arrangements were made with Mr. Evans Alloway at

Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, to conduct both holistic and error-count assessments of student papers. In preparation for the paper readings to take place in May at ETS, we masked names and group identification of the papers' authors and sampled from each group in order for the readers to error count papers from each school and from each group at the schools.

In May during a meeting at ETS between FERA, Evans Alloway, and the York CLC directors, plans for the ETS readings of the papers were finalized. It was decided that only papers from York would have a holistic reading.

To reveal the relative extent of improvement between groups, paper #3 and paper #9 would be scored by ETS using their usual procedures for holistic scoring. The design for the holistic reading is depicted below:

	Pre-test	Program	Post-test	
Experimental	O_1	X	O_2	O_1 = Paper #3
Control	O_1		O_2	O_2 = Paper #9

Papers #3 and #9 were read holistically because topics E and F called for papers written in an argumentative mode. The Program Directors thought that the argumentative topics were more representative of college writing. A total of 399 papers were read holistically.

The design of the error count was also reviewed at this meeting. The original design for the error count was as follows:

Experimental	O_1	O_2	O_3	X	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_1 = Paper 1
Control	O_1	O_2	O_3		O_4	O_5	O_6	O_2 = Paper 2
								O_3 = Paper 3
								O_4 = Paper 7
								O_5 = Paper 8
								O_6 = Paper 9

Due to budgetary constraints on the number of papers that could be scored, papers #3 and #7 were omitted from the error counts. Thus, the final design of the error count was:

Experimental	O_1	O_2	X	O_3	O_4	O_1 = Paper 1
Control	O_1	O_2		O_3	O_4	O_2 = Paper 2
						O_3 = Paper 8
						O_4 = Paper 9

This design for the error count included papers written in both the argumentative mode and in the descriptive mode. Papers #1 were on argumentative topics A and B, and Papers #9 were on argumentative topics E and F. Papers #2 and #8 were on the descriptive topics C and D. Due to the costs of the scorings, it was decided that a random sample would be drawn from the papers of the three schools. The following chart documents the total number of papers used in the error counts.

FIGURE 4
TOTAL NUMBER OF PAPERS
RANDOMLY SELECTED FOR ERROR COUNTS

		Paper #1	Paper #2	Paper #8	Paper #9
Experimental:					
York	(Total Student N =118)	53	53	53	53
Metropolitan	(Total Student N = 37)	12	12	12	12
South Central	(Total Student N = 47)	12	12	12	12
Control:					
York	(Total Student N =115)	53	53	53	53
Metropolitan	(Total Student N = 20)	12	12	12	12
South Central	(Total Student N = 47)	12	12	12	12

The holistic and error count scorings took place at ETS and involved eight readers trained by ETS. The readers counted errors on 390 York papers (out of 834 experimental and control papers), 95 of Metropolitan's 259 papers,

and 70 of 234 from South Central.

An additional 399 papers from York were scored holistically by two readers each giving one score (ranging from 1 to 6) for each paper; if there was a substantial difference between the two scores, Mr. Alloway would read the papers and resolve them.

Data analyzed by FERA included the interviews, student attitudinal surveys with some demographic information, paper scores, and classroom information. Together, these sources provided a greater richness of experience and background than the more quantified data alone.

The questionnaires for experimental and control students differed somewhat. Experimentals were asked about their attitudes toward the Comp Lab and the course structure, while the control students reported their attitudes toward materials used in their "traditional" course. All students were asked about their expectations for the course and their attitudes toward writing, their teacher, and their course. Of the total 288 questionnaires analyzed, 137 were from control students, and 151 from experimental students. The survey instrument also requested information about the students themselves, such as age, race, ethnicity, native language, prior experience with basic English, and other academic data. Additional information such as final grades, hours spent in Comp Lab, and the number of modules completed were available from the experimental teacher.

Due to a misunderstanding in survey instructions, only half of the survey respondents provided their social security numbers. Consequently, it was impossible to integrate information from one data set to another or to compare writing scores with survey data. However, we were able to describe the groups at each school demographically and look at their attitudes within the context of these descriptions.

Data analysis was multifaceted. Based on observation and interviews, it was possible to derive a fairly accurate description about CLC, its institutional settings, its estimated impact as reported by control and experimental teachers and administrators, and its strengths and weaknesses as seen by all. Interview data from all three schools were coded for similar patterns of student reactions to their class. The attitudinal survey responses were analyzed according to group (experimental or control) and by race, sex, and school. Means and distributions were compared for differences, and significance tests were performed between control and experimental groups when possible. Finally, we examined the holistic scorings of papers from York and the error-counted scores of papers from all three schools. By comparing the mean scores of the experimental and control groups, we were able to determine if any changes had occurred in writing ability. For the experimental students at all schools, we also examined the relationship between laboratory participation and final grade and change in writing scores.

Reporting

FERA's findings were presented orally to EKS in Ann Arbor in mid-June. At that time we discussed the meaning of the data and the insights derived during the project. Some further requests for additional analysis were acted on and plans for the format and timing of the final report were detailed. This report represents the final activity of this evaluation study of the Comp-Lab Course.

Limitations

Although the research design was as comprehensive and systematic as possible, it was not without its flaws. First, it is important to note that no "pure" treatment within or between the groups was possible. The number

of papers assigned, the teaching style of each faculty person, the additional support services utilized by students, and the standards for grading papers were not controlled. Further, the small sizes of the Metropolitan and South Central samples made analysis difficult and comparisons weak. Finally, the fact that the study was completed by other than its original evaluator led to some changes in the design after the study had begun. Nonetheless, these caveats do not destroy the findings but only caution the reader and limit generalizations.

CHAPTER III: EVALUATION FINDINGS

To evaluate a program like CLC, FERA believed a number of approaches were necessary. We felt it was not enough to have objective data only (e.g., the holistic scores on a set of papers). Affective evaluations--by students, faculty, lab supervisors, and the administration--were also very important. Therefore, analyses of all these sources of information were included in FERA's evaluation. The following six questions were developed to cover most of the major issues:

1. Who were the students in this study?

2. How does CLC compare with other ways of improving student writing?

3. Do students like CLC as much as the comparison students like their course, and do they find it useful?

4. Do teachers like CLC more than other approches to writing instruction, and do they find it useful?

5. What were the perceptions of CLC of the support staff and administration?

6. What else does CLC affect?

The first question describes the sample. The next three questions deal with impact. Questions 5 and 6 explore transferability and perceived costs of CLC. Through these points, the major issues of the study are addressed.

1. Who were the students in this study?

The following figure summarizes the major demographic breakdowns of study participants. In general, the age and sex of the respondents are comparable within and between groups. However, some differences are clear. York has the

largest percentages of black students, although the experimental and control groups are roughly equal in their enrollment of black students. York also has the smallest number of white students. Metropolitan is unique in its enrollment of native Americans. York also has the highest percentage of repeaters in basic writing, indicating the severity of the problem at that school. Despite these differences, the samples share many of the same characteristics and were good for evaluative comparisons.

FIGURE 5
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF
ATTITUDINAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

		YORK		METROPOLITAN		SOUTH CENTRAL	
		Experimental (N=85)	Control (N=72)	Experimental (N=29)	Control (N=23)	Experimental (N=17)	Control (N=35)
Age	Minimum	17 yrs	18 yrs	17 yrs	18 yrs	17 yrs	18 yrs
	Maximum	48 yrs	47 yrs	62 yrs	46 yrs	37 yrs	34 yrs
	Mean	23 yrs	22 yrs	22 yrs	22 yrs	27 yrs	24 yrs
Sex	Male	27%	37%	21%	35%	44%	34%
	Female	73%	63%	79%	65%	56%	66%
Ethnicity	Black	86%	72%	50%	15%	43%	54%
	White	1%	6.5%	41%	80%	43%	29%
	Hispanic	11%	22%	--	--	14%	18%
	Native American	1%	--	9%	5%	--	--
Native Language	English	82%	78%	93%	96%	94%	83%
	Spanish	7%	14%	--	--	6%	11%
	Other	11%	8%	8%	4%	--	6%
Repeating Basic Writing	Yes	22%	21%	3%	--	--	6%
	No	78%	79%	97%	100%	100%	94%

2. How does CLC compare with other ways of improving student writing?

In order to answer this question, FERA used four approaches as detailed in the section on methodology. They were: (1) a student survey, (2) interviews

with CLC teachers, (3) an error count on selected papers, and (4) a holistic evaluation of York papers. Analyses using all four approaches have indicated that CLC students benefitted from being in the experimental group. The following text discusses this improvement under the sub-headings of student survey data, error counts, holistic scores, and faculty responses.

Student Survey Data

Although the most subjective of the data sources, the attitudinal survey was valuable because the students' feelings about writing are of such importance. As Figure 6 documents, CLC students felt their writing had improved. By the end of the term, 83% felt that they wrote more correctly than they had at the start of term; 78% felt that writing was now easier; 62% worried less about writing for school; 71% enjoyed writing more; and 72% knew what to do to write a satisfactory paper. These response patterns of the majority of students in CLC indicate that the course gave them positive feelings about their writing. With one exception, Figure 6 also shows that positive feelings about writing were equally characteristic of the control group.

FIGURE 6
ATTITUDE COMPARISONS BETWEEN
THE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

By the end of term, I...	Experimental (% in agreement) *	Control (% in agreement) *
wrote more correctly	83%	85%
found writing easier	78%	78%
worried less about writing	62%	79%
enjoyed writing more	71%	71%
knew what to do to write a satisfactory paper	72%	77%
enjoyed writing outside class	57%	**

* % signifies those who strongly or somewhat agreed with each statement.

** This question not asked of Control Group.

Although there was little difference between the two groups on any of the variables, one exception was students' worry about their writing. Although the majority of students in the experimental group agreed that they worried less about their writing by the end of the term, a substantially greater percentage of the control group expressed this feeling. A possible explanation of this discrepancy may be that as students become more knowledgeable about writing, they may worry more about correctness rather than less. Our data do not explain this contradiction. However, taken in the context of the other items which indicate more comfort with writing as well as the sizeable percentage within the experimental group which expressed less nervousness, this particular point seems less important.

The only other significant difference between the groups had to do with their enjoyment of writing outside class. Fifty-seven percent of the CLC students were positive about their enjoyment of free writing. This could indicate that CLC has impact on students' desire to write for themselves or it may be that CLC students were very comfortable with the technique of free writing because their teachers may have used it more. Again, this survey does not explain the responses.

What is most striking about these data are the similarities between the groups rather than the differences. In both groups, the students feel that their writing abilities have improved in only one semester. Our next task was to see if the more objective test scores concurred with these feelings.

Error Count

This summary of the error count analysis is based on comparisons of Papers #1 to #9, and of Papers #2 to #8, using matched and unmatched samples. Matched sample comparisons are based on the performances of students who completed both the pre- and post-test papers of a particular set. For instance,

all individuals in the matched sample for comparisons of Papers #1 and #9 completed both these papers. Unmatched sample comparisons are based on a composite of all those students who completed the pre-test paper tested against the composite of all those students who completed the post-test paper; some of these individuals may or may not have completed both papers. Figure 7 (page 22) summarizes the areas in which significant changes in performance were revealed as a result of the matched and unmatched smaple comparisons of the Experimental and Control Groups on the features evaluated. Tables displaying the mean differences in error count scores and appropriate test statistics are included in Appendix B.

The matched sample comparison of Papers #1 and #9 revealed that the Experimental Group demonstrated significant positive change in the following areas:

1) Total number of words (e.g., post-test papers were longer).
2) Number of sentence errors per 100 words (e.g., errors decreased).
3) Number of sentence errors per verb (e.g., errors decreased).
4) Total number of sentence errors (e.g., errors decreased).
5) Number of spelling errors per verb (e.g. errors decreased).
6) Number of total errors per verb (e.g., errors decreased).

Similar comparisons for the Control Group reveal no significant positive changes on these or the other variables. Neither group showed significant negative change, thus indicating no decline in performance.

In the unmatched sample comparison, the Experimental Group demonstrated significant positive change in all of the six above areas, as well as in areas involving verb form errors, sentence errors, spelling errors, and total errors. The Control Group showed some improvement in total words, spelling errors per verb, total errors per verb, and total spelling errors. All other areas evaluated did not reveal significant changes.

FIGURE 7
ERROR COUNT:
Positive Changes In Performance[a,b]
for Matched and Unmatched Samples

Features Evaluated	Experimental Group				Control Group			
	Papers 1 & 9		Papers 2 & 8		Papers 1 & 9		Papers 2 & 8	
	Matched N=34	Unmatched N=26/43	Matched N=31	Unmatched N=28/41	Matched N=30	Unmatched N=41/44	Matched N=24	Unmatched N=47/46
A. Total words	X	X	X		N.S.	X		
B. Words/Verb		X		X				
C. Verb form errors/100 words		X		X				
D. Sentence errors/100 words	X	X	XX	X				
E. Spelling errors/100 words				X			X	
F. Other errors/100 words			XX					X
G. Verb form errors/verb		X	X	X				
H. Sentence errors/verb	X	X	X	X				
I. Spelling errors/verb	X	X	X	X		X	XX	
J. Other errors/verb			X					X
K. Total errors/100 words		X	X	X			X	X
L. Total errors/verb	X	X	X	XX		X	XX	X
TOTALS:								
M. Total errors		X	X	X			X	X
N. Total verb form errors		X		X				
O. Total sentence errors	XX	X	XX	X				
P. Total spelling errors				X		X	X	
Q. Total other errors			XX					X

a - Matched sample comparisons based on t-tests and Wilcoxon tests. Unmatched sample comparisons based on two-sample t-tests, Mann-Whitney U statistics, and median tests.

b - Significance computed at .05 and .09

X - indicates significant positive improvement calculated at .05

XX- indicates significant positive improvement calculated at .09

In comparisons of Papers #2 and #8 the Control Group continued to show fewer areas of significant improvement than the Experimental Group. In the matched sample comparison for the Experimental Group, the significant changes were primarily in the areas of errors "per verb" (i.e., verb form, sentence, spelling, and other errors). In the unmatched sample comparison for this group, all areas except those involving "other errors" and the area of "total words" revealed significant improvement in performance on Paper #8. In the matched sample Control Group, improvements in performance were significant for all areas of "spelling" errors (i.e., per verb, per 100 words, and total). In the unmatched sample, all areas of "other" errors (i.e., per verb, per 100 words, and total) showed significant improvement.

Overall, it appears that the Experimental Group made progress in all features evaluated at the time of the post-test (Papers #8 and #9). The only areas in which the Control Group showed significant progress were "other error" and spelling errors. It is also interesting that in the matched sample comparison of Papers #1 and #9 for the Experimental Group, three of the six areas in which there was significant change relate to sentence errors. The fewer grammatical errors found in papers of CLC students appear to have resulted from the emphasis on grammatical correctness in CLC lab work.

The above summary of the error count data is based on analyses of group means. Other analyses support these conclusions by indicating that a significant number of students in both groups show improved performance on several features in Papers #8 and #9. In the Experimental Group, these findings are significant at the 95% confidence level, in all but three instances (words per paper, verb form per verb, and sentence per verb, $p < .09$). Comparable data for the Control Group indicates that a significant number of students show improved performance on only five of the seventeen variables. Improvement was

seen in spelling errors, total words per paper, verb form errors per 100 words, total verb form errors, and total errors per verb ($p < .05$). At the 90% confidence level, a significant number of Control Group students also show improved performance on all types of "other" errors. The data for the Experimental and Control Groups are reported in Appendix B, Tables 2,4,6,8, and the reader is encouraged to review those tables. In sum, the error count indicates that the CLC students improved and improved more than the comparison students.

Holistic Evaluation

The above summary suggests that after extensive work on grammatical errors, the CLC students significantly reduced many errors in their writing. Of interest also is their overall writing ability; thus, a holistic evaluation was desirable. As explained earlier, a sample of York Papers #3 and #9 was read holistically with two readers each giving one score (ranging from 1 to 6) for each paper. These two scores were then added, yielding a possible range of scores from 2 to 12. Figure 8 (page 25) provides summary data calculated on the basis of these scores and related information.

As Figure 8 shows, both the Experimental and Control groups improved their performance on Paper #9. Although the improvement appears slight, it is significant at the 90 percent level. Of greater interest, is the indication that the Experimental Group's improvement is slightly greater than that of the Control Group. Although the difference in the means (7.0 and 6.6 for Experimental and Control, respectively,) is not significant, it cannot be ignored.

Additionally, on Paper #3, about 16 percent of the Control Group received a score of 9 points or better, whereas only 7 percent of the Experimental Group fell in this category. However, on Paper #9, about 28 percent of the Experimental Group scored 9 points or better as compared to 22 percent for the Control Group. This information suggests that by the end of their courses, both groups perform comparably. However, the data with respect to final course grades suggests a

different picture.

FIGURE 8
HOLISTIC EVALUATION:
COMPARISONS OF YORK PAPER #3 AND PAPER #9 BY GROUP

GROUP York Only	MEAN SCORE[a]		PERCENTAGE SCORING 9		% Students w/ Failing Grade	MEAN SCORE[b] OF THOSE:			
						Failing		Passing	
	Paper 3	Paper 9	Paper 3	Paper 9		Paper 3	Paper 9	Paper 3	Paper 9
Experimental N=118	5.7 (N=92)	7.0 (N=83)	7%	20%	41%	4.8	6.1	6.3	7.6
Control N=115	6.0 (N=106)	6.6 (N=94)	16%	22%	29%	4.7	4.9	6.8	7.3

a - Possible score range: 2-12

b - No significant differences between Experimental and Control groups for either Paper #3 or Paper #9.

By the end of the Basic Composition course, nearly 41 percent of the Experimental students fail as compared to only 29 percent of the Control Group students, as indicated in Figures 8 and 9. This might suggest that the CLC program has little impact; however, there is good information which indicates the contrary. In general, the students who failed the Basic Composition course were those who had started the course with lower scores on their papers; they were students who had further to go to make their writing passable. Of those who failed, the students in the Experimental Group made more progress than those

in the Control Group. The average failing score for Paper #3 was 4.8 and 4.7 for the Experimental and Control Groups, respectively. On Paper #9, the Experimental Group showed a mean gain of 1.3 points (mean score was 6.1); the Control Group showed a mean gain of only .2 points (mean score was 4.9). More important than the gain from Paper #3 to Paper #9 for the Experimental Group, is the fact that the gain is 1.2 points better than that of the Control Group's mean of the same paper. Thus, it appears that those in the Experimental Group who failed the course did make some progress in their writing ability, and that their progress surpassed that of the Control Group.

Also of interest, are the mean scores of Papers #3 and #9 for those in both the Experimental Group and the Control Group who passed the Basic Composition course. Of those who passed the course in the Experimental Group, the average scores on Papers #3 and #9 were 6.3 and 7.6, respectively. For those who passed the course in the Control Group, the average scores on Papers #3 and #9 were 6.8 and 7.3, respectively. It again appears that the Experimental Group's gain in performance was greater than the Control's, and that the Experimental Group's performance of Paper #9 was better than in the Control Group.

The holistic evaluation, therefore, shows a noticeable gain for both the Experimental and Control Groups. Though the gains were slightly larger for the Experimental Group, the differences in the performance were not dramatic nor statistically significant. In fact, some students in each group regressed between Papers #3 and #9 (18 percent of the Experimental Group and 28 percent of the Control Group). Some of the regressions can be explained by individuals performing better or worse than average on a particular paper. Had all the papers been evaluated, such regressions might have proven to be exceptions to an otherwise progressive trend. The reliability of the holistic scoring is attested to, however, by the correlation of passing final grades: those who

failed the Basic Composition course had lower scores on the essays than those who passed the course.

As a final explanation of the pass and fail rates of this sample, it is interesting to note the differences between the schools. Figure 9 presents these data. York CLC students had the highest failure rates among all groups. Perhaps this is because the York students had further to go to improve their writing, as previously suggested in Figure 8. However, it could also indicate the CLC evaluation standards are unusually high at York or low at the other schools. Whatever the reason, further research would be necessary to explain this phenomenon.

FIGURE 9
PASS-FAIL RATES BY GROUP BY SCHOOL

	YORK (N=233)			METRO (N=57)		SOUTH CENTRAL (N=94)	
	Pass	Fail	Other	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Experimental	49%	41%	10%	89%	11%	68%	32%
Control	60%	29%	11%	70%	30%	83%	17%

Faculty Responses

Both control and experimental faculty were experienced Basic Writing teachers, desired to work in a basic skills program, and felt that their approach to the subject was effective. A total of seven experimental faculty and eight control faculty were involved, although only thirteen people were interviewed because one South Central faculty taught both experimental and control sections and another South Central faculty person was unavailable for an interview. Because of the small number of faculty interviewed, the data were not computerized and generalizations about differences are few.

In terms of assessing the improvement of students' writing, all the faculty agreed that their version of basic writing was generally effective in

helping students improve their writing. Using a scale of effectiveness from one (not at all) to five (extraordinary), all but one of the Experimental faculty judged CLC to be very or extraordinarily effective in improving students' writing. The other person viewed it as somewhat effective. The mean score was 4.1. The Control group faculty assessed their approach as similarly effective ($\overline{X}$=4). Both groups of faculty stressed that students' motivation was the key to the program's effectiveness. The students who did their work tended to have better grades than those who spent little time doing lab work in CLC or the assignments in the Control classes. In sum, from the faculty perspective, students' writing often improved over the term because of their course.

Summary of All Sources

All data sources indicate that both groups made writing progress. Teachers noticed improvement and students noticed improvement; holistic evaluation and error counts confirmed the improvement. Neither group made consistent progress in all areas, but some progress was made in many areas. However, for basic writers, any improvement can be a large improvement.

As the different evaluations indicate, the Experimental group seems to have improved their writing more than the Control group. Perhaps the larger amount of writing done by the Experimental group (some 1,500 words per week compared to about 300 for the Control group) helped to improve their writing skills. Additionally, some of their attitudes about the entire writing process seemed more developed than those of the Control group, as exemplified by the Comp Lab students' use of free writing and using writing to clarify their ideas. Comp Lab students also seemed more inclined to value grammatical knowledge than did the Control students. The two outside evaluations of the

writing samples found CLC students' writing to be better than the Control Groups' writing in many ways. It is an understatement to say that CLC does not deter students' progress, and with some caveats, it is safe to say that CLC students did better than their peers in improving their writing skills.

3. Do students like CLC as much as the comparison students like their course, and do they find it useful?

Student interviews and data from the attitudinal survey provide insights to these questions. From the surveys we know that 76% of the CLC students and 81% of the Control students agreed that what they did in class helped them with their writing problems. In general, there were few significant differences between the two groups and both groups felt positively toward their respective classes.

Figure 10 summarizes some of the other attitudes students held concerning their like and use of CLC.

FIGURE 10
CLC STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT CLC

ITEM:	% AGREED *
I enjoyed working in the lab.	56%
I enjoyed working in the lab by myself without a teacher.	75%
Working on one kind of error at a time was helpful.	85%
Understanding that a sentence consists of a kernel plus expansion helped me to correct my mistakes.	76%
The Comp Lab exercises really helped me to understand grammar.	83%
My teacher was helpful.	85%

* % signifies those strongly or somewhat agreed with each statement.

It would seem that the focus on errors and grammar were enjoyed by the students even more than the free writing or the autotutorial aspects of the lab, which were also positive aspects of CLC. Together, these elements contributed to the improvement in writing that CLC students reported and explain why students found the course useful.

In selecting the three most important things in good writing, technical matters (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and style) were seen by CLC students to be equally high in importance. Paper organization was rated by fewer students as being crucial to good writing. In contrast, the Control Group felt organization was slightly more important than technical concerns, with style a distant third. It is interesting that style, which included elements such as flow, balance, and effectiveness, was rated so highly by CLC students. This would seem to indicate that CLC fosters at least an awareness that interesting writing is more than just grammatically correct. This dual emphasis may be another reason why students liked CLC.

As reflected in the surveys, the emphases of the course help determine the value that students place on the components of writing. With the exception of many more Experimental students than Control students doing free writing when they write a paper, the two groups agreed that they generally write a rough draft and revise; few, in either group, outline. In the interviews, the Experimental Group concurred with the Control Group that the most important thing that they had learned in their course was the process of writing (i.e., how to use a variety of steps to put a paper together). However, in the survey responses, the CLC students seem to suggest that grammar was more important to them. Perhaps this reaffirms that CLC students feel that both elements are crucial to good writing.

Because the surveys and the interviews tend to deal with different kinds of information, the two cannot be compared and contrasted with validity. Some trends, however, tend to be seen in both sources. The content of the CLC tapes and the lab modules were reported by many students in the interviews and in the survey to be the single most helpful aspect of the course. In the classroom, most CLC students liked discussion with the teacher best. This is interesting

because the majority of the Control students interviewed rated their in-class writing exercises as the most helpful aspect of their course. It would appear that CLC does free up the teacher to work interpersonally in class rather than use class time to work on writing assignments.

In both the interviews and the surveys, the Experimental Group continued to state that the in-class work, such as free-writing and reviewing was helpful for they felt that what the teachers had to offer them was valuable. The lab seemed to present few or no problems for them, with no complaints about having to use tape recorders. The relationships with the lab supervisors were positive and seemed to compensate for any lack of contact with the faculty person. In general, CLC students seem to have found the experience a positive one.

4. Do teachers like CLC more than other approaches to writing instruction, and do they find it useful?

As previously mentioned, teachers interviewed from both the Experimental and Control Groups generally considered their course to be very effective, with the observation that the students' motivation greatly affected how much they learned in the course. Simply, they liked their methodology and felt it was useful to students.

CLC teachers often listed its strong points to be that the students could pace themselves and repeat exercises as necessary. Additionally, the flexibility of the structure appealed to most teachers, as did the clarity of the modules. Some CLC faculty also felt that the autotutorial aspect of the tapes was especially valuable for ESL students, and also for speakers of non-standard English. One teacher cited the high quality of the York faculty as a strength of the program and another was pleased that the lab situation allowed the teacher to have more one-to-one contact with the students in class. The structure of the lab seemed to facilitate more flexibility in the

classroom. This made CLC both useful and pleasing to the faculty.

Naturally, there were weaknesses in the program as well. Among the Experimental faculty, the two most common complaints were: 1) there were often too many students in the lab so the situation was not in reality one-to-one between the student and the lab supervisor; and 2) the amount of paperwork and record keeping involved with module completion was generally seen as being excessive. One teacher was concerned that the students were on their own too much in the lab. Another felt class time was too short and class contact needed to be increased. One teacher felt that the lab situation was not appropriate for all students and, therefore, should not be mandatory. And another complained that the hours the lab was open were not long enough

Teachers in the Control Group cited small, enjoyable classes as the major strength of their program. They felt the atmosphere was good, and the classes could be geared to each student. Additionally, one teacher welcomed the chance to use a variety of presentations in the classroom.

The most common complaint of teachers in the Control Group was that their course was too unstructured and that it allowed too much flexibility. One teacher cited the skills variance of students in the class as a problem, and another felt the text was a weakness.

In sum, the processes of both the Experimental and Control classes, different as they were, seemed to hold the greatest appeal for the faculty. The structure of CLC, which CLC faculty generally enjoyed, might be of interest to the Control faculty, which sometimes experienced too much non-structure in their classes. CLC does not seem to deprive faculty of relationships with students, and in fact, may facilitate better contact with students. Because grammatical information is covered in the lab, teachers could devote more time to the overall writing process, including organization, support ideas, and style. Ideally,

faculty could hold their office hours in or near the lab to make both components of the course seem more integrated. Most teachers found the atmosphere to be exceptionally good, in part due to the motivation of the students. While CLC is not perfect in the minds of its faculty, they are pleased with its effectiveness and structure.

5. What were the perceptions of the support staff and administration?

Lab Supervisors

Support staff have a crucial role in CLC, for the entire lab component is their responsibility. We interviewed 8 lab supervisors and/or student tutors for this study. Their views about student reactions to CLC, as well as their own feelings, were important to this study.

Lab supervisors have mixed feelings about the lab situation. In most cases, time was cited as a problem, for some students needed to spend a large amount of time working on the modules. Occasionally a few students found the directions for the exercises unclear or the exercises so simple as to be boring; this sometimes resulted in a less than comfortable atmosphere for the supervisors. Although students seem to have little or no difficulty in using the tapes, occasional faulty tapes partially obscured some directions. While these issues were relatively minor, they are problems the supervisors had to deal with either directly or indirectly in the labs.

Lab supervisors additionally had some fairly serious problems with their role. The most common complaint centered on too much work to be done and too little staff to do it. At times, supervisors felt the labs were short-staffed, so it was difficult for them to keep up with spot-checking students' correction of their own work. Additionally, too much paperwork and filing of NCR paper were seen as major problems, problems aggravated by insufficient staff. The length of some of the modules was also mentioned as a problem, with the suggestion that they be

shortened, both for the sake of the students and the supervisors. A final problem for lab supervisors was the lack of a real relationship with the students. Having no contact with the class except while they were working in the lab, the supervisors felt their ability to connect with students was hampered.

A number of strong points about the lab were made clear by the supervisors. They felt that the information given the students in the modules was valuable. The fact that students could go over an exercise as many times as necessary without embarrassment and without others' judgment impressed them. Furthermore, students could learn from each other and supervisors saw lots of peer teaching taking place. Some mentioned that the immediate feedback given to students when modules were corrected in the labs served as a strong motivator for students to complete lab work. Supervisors also saw the labs as especially valuable to ESL speakers because of the unlimited amount of practice afforded them by the tapes.

Administrators

The interviews with the administrators involved only four people, representing York and Metro only. Nonetheless, the administrative perspective is a unique one as it is not directly a part of the teaching-learning experiment.

After helping to install the program and lab, the Administration, for the most part, was not actively involved. At both schools, they have watched the program to gain insight into cost-effectiveness and quality. A primary concern has been the increased instructional time involved in using lab supervisors. However, the situations at the two schools are quite different. At York, the Comp Lab apprach was conceived as an internal response to external problems resulting from fiscal constraints and politics. At Metropolitan, the desire to experiment with Comp Lab arose internally as a possible means of

better educating basic skills students and increasing the retention rates in classes.

The reaction of non-Comp Lab faculty to the approach again varied between schools, according to administrators. At Metropolitan, other faculty were said to be favorably impressed with the approach because of its seeming success in retaining students. At York, the reactions of some non-CLC faculty varied from indifferent to negative. Lack of information about the process, secrecy on the part of EKS, disbelief in its methodology, or other motives may explain some of these reactions. There are no real facts to explain these feelings. Obviously the context is clearly a factor in determining reactions to the program, as indicated by the administrators' comments.

Administrators perceive the Comp Lab approach to be slightly more expensive than traditional basic skills instruction, but all admit that their data are incomplete. NCR paper costs and/or higher staffing expenses due to the use of lab supervisors are seen as the major issues. This latter cost factor depends on whether the use of a paraprofessional as lab supervisor is instead of or in addition to the cost of faculty salaries. Furthermore, the administrators felt that information about retention and repeater rates, number of credit hours generated, and other staffing costs needed to be researched so the actual costs of Comp Lab would be available.

In general, the administrators are open to the approach and would like to find it to be successful, but are deferring a final judgment until more information about CLC's costs are available. In the near future, the acceptance of the program is strong. York made a firm decision to keep the program regardless of cost-effectiveness. Metropolitan also has decided to continue the program and has allocated additional funds. South Central will modify the program, but will continue to offer the CLC lab format.

This evidence of the acceptance of the program at Metro and South Central speaks to the transferability of CLC. With approximately two days of on-site training by EKS, complemented by training manuals and phone calls, Metro and South Central began the experiment. After one term of existence on these campuses, it has been adopted, at least in some form. Faculty felt it worked, administrators believed it was so, and thus, CLC is a part of the basic skills offerings at York, Metro, and South Central.

It should be noted that CLC was adopted at Metro and South Central even after severe difficulties in administering the course at the beginning of the experimental semester. At Metro, the original teacher (David Hanson) became ill before classes began, and his teaching duties were taken over by Ann Kimbrough (who would originally have had only the lab supervisor duties). At South Central, the original teacher of the CLC course failed to get an expected degree, and was replaced by John Flannelly several weeks into the semester.

6. What else does CLC affect?

In addition to the primary goal of improving writing, CLC affects students and faculty in several other ways, some that can be anticipated, others that are surprising. Retention rates, confidence, the accountability and the enjoyment of writing were other consequences of CLC.

Students reported that CLC taught them how to study for other courses. Sixty-seven percent of the Metro students, fifty-eight percent of the York students, and thirty-nine percent of the South Central students agreed that the lab work taught them a lot about good study skills, such as organization, pacing, and tenacity. The self-reliance and motivation that students develop by working on their own in the lab would have to help them in their other classes.

Some faculty were impressed by the high retention rates in CLC. A drop-out rate of 30% to 50% is not uncommon for these basic skills teachers. Yet at

Metro, only three of forty students withdrew from CLC. The faculty there attributed this to the reinforcement and accomplishment that CLC gives students as they work through the lab modules. Other CLC faculty did not experience such high retention rates as those at Metro, which would suggest that this point should be researched in more depth if other test sites are involved.

Several other CLC faculty were highly impressed by the accountability that the system provides. Each week one could see how many hours students had spent in the lab and how many modules had been completed. The student had to assume this responsibility and if she/he did not, it was very easy to identify who was keeping up with her/his work. Further, the modules could highlight specific problems with the content. A student might do well on the first five modules yet stumble on the sixth. The faculty person and lab supervisor could then work closely with the student to help them on the specific point of that module rather than have to deal with an unfocused "I just don't get it". Some CLC faculty reported that they would try to weave this accountability into their other courses as well.

In sum, the fact that 71% of the CLC students enjoyed writing more by the end of the term as well as feeling less nervous about writing speaks well for the process. Aside from just improving writing, CLC also gave faculty and students some unintended but positive effects.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSIONS AND POINTS TO PONDER

After evaluating the Comp Lab program at all three schools, it is clear that this program with reduced classroom hours is as effective as other alternative approaches to the teaching of basic writing, and seems to be more effective in reducing students' writing errors. The students did not make dramatic improvement in either the Control or Experimental groups. However, the improvement in the Experimental Group tended to exceed that of the Control Group as documented by the holistic scoring and error counts. Clearly no student was placed at a disadvantage by being in the Comp Lab group.

One particular relationship between student characteristics and progress in the course has become apparent. The more highly motivated students do better: students who spent large amounts of time in the lab proved to be more likely to pass the course than students who spent little time in the lab. Therefore, one might expect that older, more mature students may well do better than younger, less mature students. Also ESL students concerned about their English might benefit from CLC because they could review the tapes at their own pace as much as needed.

A number of improvements for future consideration have become apparent. First, are there changes that could reduce the worry about writing that 49% of the CLC students reported? More research about the causes of this anxiety needs to be done before solutions are clear. In addition, the lab and the classroom sometimes appeared to have been too separate. Modification of the program to result in a tighter connection between the lab and classroom would be beneficial, at least in the minds of the lab supervisors and some students. Having the teacher touch on and reinforce subject matter from the lab, as well as having faculty schedule their office hours in or near the lab might help make class exercises and the lab modules less disparate. Some complaints were voiced

about lab hours. Could they be changed or, preferably, extended, higher student attendance might result.

Clearly, Comp Lab has proven to be a serious option as an approach to the teaching of writing. The various methodologies used in the control sections also proved effective. Certainly, the worst situation is where students in need of basic writing skills are left to flounder on their own. From the findings of this study, the merits of CLC should be of interest to many other schools who face the same challenge of teaching post-secondary students how to write.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW AND SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

ID# _____

CLC

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

1. What are the kinds of things that happened during classes? I know the teacher taught grammar, but what are some of the other things that went on?

a.	lectures	___ Yes	___ No
b.	small-group work	___ Yes	___ No
c.	rewriting papers	___ Yes	___ No
d.	correcting papers	___ Yes	___ No
e.	discussion (Of what? Probe)	___ Yes	___ No
f.	work in a text book or work book	___ Yes	___ No
g.	Other _____	___ Yes	___ No
	_____	___ Yes	___ No

2. What two things were most helpful to you?

	Class	Lab
a.		
b.		

3. What two things were least helpful to you?

	Class	Lab
a.		
b.		

4. What do you think are the three most important things in good writing?

5. Did you do a lot of writing in this class?

6. Would you say that your teacher spent much, some, or little time on the following:

	Much	Some	Little
a. grammar	____	____	____
b. sentence structure	____	____	____
c. essay structure/organization	____	____	____
d. techniques of developing ideas	____	____	____
e. getting ideas for writing	____	____	____
f. readings, assignments and discussions of them	____	____	____
g. analyzing other students' writing	____	____	____

7. How do you go about writing a paper? What I mean is, what steps do you personally follow?

Free Writing	___ Yes	___ No
Outline	___ Yes	___ No
Rough Draft	___ Yes	___ No
Revising (fixing ideas, correcting words, proof reading)	___ Yes	___ No

8. How many tapes did you listen to?

9. What modules did you like most and least and why?

10. Was your lab supervisor helpful? How?

11. What were the two most valuable things about this course?

Class Lab

12. What were the two least valuable things about the course?

Class Lab

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving this class?

ID# _____

Control

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

1. What are the kinds of things that happened during classes? I know the teacher taught grammar, but what are some of the other things that went on?

a.	lectures	___ Yes	___ No
b.	small-group work	___ Yes	___ No
c.	rewriting papers	___ Yes	___ No
d.	correcting papers	___ Yes	___ No
e.	discussion (of what? Probe)	___ Yes	___ No
f.	work in a textbook or workbook	___ Yes	___ No
g.	other _____	___ Yes	___ No
	_____	___ Yes	___ No

2. What two things were most helpful to you?

a.

b.

3. What two things were least helpful to you?

a.

b.

4. What do you think are the three most important things in good writing?

5. Did you do a lot of writing in this class?

6. Would you say that your teacher spent much, some, or little time on the following:

	Much	Some	Little
a. grammar	___	___	___
b. sentence structure	___	___	___
c. essay structure/organization	___	___	___
d. techniques of developing ideas	___	___	___
e. getting ideas for writing	___	___	___
f. readings, assignments and discussions of them	___	___	___
g. analyzing other students' writing	___	___	___

7. How do you go about writing a paper? What I mean is, what steps do you personally follow?

Free Writing	___ Yes	___ No
Outline	___ Yes	___ No
Rough Draft	___ Yes	___ No
Revising (fixing ideas, correcting words, proof reading)	___ Yes	___ No

8. What were the two most valuable things about this course?

9. What were the two least valuable things about the course?

10. Do you have any suggestions for improving this class?

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INSTRUCTOR'S INTERVIEW

Introduction

FERA

Overview of Research

- Students (E/C) Writing samples
  Survey
  Interviews
  Logs
- Teacher (E/C)
- Lab Supervisor
- Coordinator
- Institutional Administrator

Purpose of this interview

- Find out your opinion about course
- Perspective on students
- What difference course makes for students
- What difference course makes for teachers

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Time of interview _____

Telephone Number _____

INSTRUCTORS' INTERVIEW

This first series of questions seeks general information about your involvement in the teaching of composition.

1. First, what is your academic rank?

2. In what department(s) is your appointment?

3. What courses do you teach?

4. How did you become an instructor in this course?

___ Volunteered ___ Selected
If volunteered, why? How selected?

5. Is teaching writing a new direction for you or something you have done before this program?

___ New direction ___ Done before

- Is the lab approach new to you, or one with which you are familiar? ___ New ___ Familiar

- How many terms have you taught remedial writing, including this term? _____

6. How much writing do you have your students do each week?

7. Describe the kind of writing assignments you feel your students can handle easily. Are challenged by. (Probe for difference among students.)

8. Describe your grading procedures and criteria.

9. Describe your classroom activities.

10. How well did the training prepare you to teach using the program approach?

___ Very well ___ Somewhat well ___ Not very well ___ Not at all well

11. What suggestions do you have to improve the training program?

Now we'd like to ask more about the program and specific instructional activities.

12. We would like to know whether or not your department has articulated goals for teaching students to write.

a. attitudes?

b. knowledge?

c. skills?

Do you?

a. attitudes?

b. knowledge?

c. skills?

13. How do you assess the lab's effectiveness in helping students with their writing skills?

extra-ordinarily	very	somewhat	not very	not at all
___ effective	___ effective	___ effective	___ effective	___ effective

What do you think could be done to make the lab more effective?

14. At the beginning of the term, how would you describe students' attitudes toward writing?

___ positive and responsive
___ neutral
___ negative and resistant

If there was a change over the term, how did their attitudes change?

15. Did using the Comp-Lab make a difference in students' attitude/ knowledge/skills?

16. We'd like to get a sense of what feedback method(s) or types of comments you use to inform your students of their writing progress:

(If personal contact indicated) How much personal contact do you have with your students to help them with their writing? (Probe for who initiates the contact and whether contact varies among students)

Next we would like to ask some questions to understand your own attitudes toward the students and program and to determine what supports you receive as a program instructor.

17. What do you like best about teaching on this level (remedial)?

- What do you like least?

18. If the program continues, would you also like to continue teaching in it?

___ Yes, definitely ___ Not sure ___ No If no, explain:

19. How supportive is your department/college about your involvement in remedial English?

Finally, we have some questions asking you to evaluate the program.

20. How do you assess the general effectiveness of the approach COMP-LAB uses to strengthen students' writing skills?

___ very effective ___ somewhat effective ___ not very effective ___ not at all effective

21. What are the lab's/classroom's primary strengths?

	Lab	Classroom
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

22. What are its primary weaknesses?

	Lab	Classroom
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

23. Have there been any unanticipated consequences from the program?

___ Yes ___ No
(If yes) What are they?

Positive:

Negative:

24. Is there anything else about the Comp-Lab approach that you would like to add?

25. How many years have you taught? _____

26. How many years have you taught at this institution? _____

27. How many years have you taught remedial composition?

28. How many semesters have you taught this particular course? _____

29. What training has been most relevant to this course?

30. What was your major field of study in undergraduate and graduate school?

LAB SUPERVISORS

1. What were students' attitudes toward lab work?

   a. Did they see the lab as helpful?

   b. Did they see the lab as confusing?

   c. What was their attitude toward the quantity of work?

2. What problems did students have?

3. Did students understand the procedures?

4. Did they understand the individual exercises?

5. Did you receive an adequate orientation to the lab before you began this job?

6. Did you understand the relationship of the laboratory to the classroom ?

7. Did you need more information from the teachers?

8. Were your responsibilities clear?

9. Was there adequate staffing for your duties?

10. Did you enjoy working in the lab? What was most enjoyable? Least?

11. What were your major problems? Were there things that were useless or unworkable? Did you get help with them?

12. What three things were most valuable in the system?

13. What three things were least valuable in the system?

14. What most needs changing?

Control

INSTRUCTOR'S INTERVIEW

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___ Volunteered ___ Selected
If volunteered, why? How selected?

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___ New direction ___ Done before

- Is the lab approach new to you, or one with which you are familiar? ___ New ___ Familiar

- How many terms have you taught remedial writing, including this term? _____

6. How much writing do you have your students do each week?

7. Describe the kind of writing assignments you feel your students can handle easily. Are challenged by. (Probe for difference among students.)

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a. attitudes?

b. knowledge?

c. skills?

Do you?

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___ extra-ordinarily effective	___ very effective	___ somewhat effective	___ not very effective	___ not at all effectiv

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___ positive and responsive
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15. Did ... make a difference in students' attitude/ knowledge/skills?

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- What do you like least?

18. If the program continues, would you also like to continue teaching in it?

___ Yes, definitely ___ Not sure ___ No If no, explain:

19. How supportive is your department/college about your involvement in remedial English?

Finally, we have some questions asking you to evaluate the program.

20. How do you assess the general effectiveness of the approach the course uses to strengthen students' writing skills?

___ very effective ___ somewhat effective ___ not very effective ___ not at all effective

21. What are the classroom's primary strengths?

1.

2.

3.

4.

22. What are its primary weaknesses?

1.

2.

3.

4.

23. Have there been any unanticipated consequences from the program?

___ Yes ____ No
(If yes) What are they?

Positive:

Negative:

24. Is there anything else about the course approach that you would like to add?

25. How many years have you taught? _____

26. How many years have you taught at this institution? _____

27. How many years have you taught remedial composition?

28. How many semesters have you taught this particular course? _____

29. What training has been most relevant to this course?

30. What was your major field of study in undergraduate and graduate school?

CLC + Control

PROGRAM DIRECTORS

First, we would like to find out some general information about your freshman English courses.

1. What are your Freshman English courses?

Course	Level	Mandatory/elective	credit/no credit

2. How many courses or sections were offered in:

___ Fall term 1978

___ Winter term 1978-9 (only Metro)

3. How many students were enrolled in your English 100 (or 095) courses in:

___ Fall term 1978

___ Winter Term 1978-9

- What percent is this of freshmen taking English?

4. If a screening device is used for placement, describe the device and how it is used.

5. Does English 100 (or 095) have specific goals and objectives?

   a. Attitudes:

   b. Knowledge:

   c. Skills:

6. What tells you that an individual instructor knows and follows these goals? Please explain.

7. (If courses are required) Is there an established minimum competence level which students must achieve in English 100?

   ___ Yes ___ No (If yes) 1) please identify the competences; and 2) please describe how they are measured:

8. What happens if a student fails to achieve that level after completing English 100?

9. Does English 100 seem to help certain types of students more than others? Does one COMP-LAB?

___ Yes ___ No (If yes) Please identify the types of students and the associated outcomes:

10. What approach or approaches are used for teaching writing in addition to the COMP-LAB?

11. We'd like to know generally the students' socio-economic backgrounds. Would you say: (Describe, then probe)

___ there's a mix from lower class to upper middle class
___ predominantly middle class
___ predominantly lower class

12. How about the racial or ethnic mix of students in English 100?

___ mostly white and some _____
___ mostly black and some _____
___ mostly Hispanic and some _____

13. What percent of the students in English 100 are:

a. ___ freshmen
b. ___ sophomores
c. ___ juniors
d. ___ seniors

Now we'd like to get a sense of the institutional dynamics related to adoption of COMP-LAB.

14. Why was the COMP-LAB developed? We'd like to know to what needs, requirements, or pressures it sought to respond.

15. How are you financing the COMP-LAB? What percent is funded by:

    a. ___ special monies within the college
    b. ___ regular academic funding
    c. ___ an external source: which one(s)?

16. Do you expect the COMP-LAB Program to be a regular established part of the composition curriculum?

    How and when will that be determined?

17. Have new administrative procedures, such as new record-keeping systems, been required as a result of the COMP-LAB?

    ___ Yes ___ No (If yes) Are resources adequate to support these procedures? ___ Yes ___ No (If no) What implication does this have for the program's continuation?

18. What are your own judgments about COMP-LAB's quality?

    a. What are its strengths?

    b. What are its weaknesses?

19. Think for a moment about all the results of initiating the COMP-LAB. Have there been any unintended consequences of this program -- negative or positive?

___ Yes ___ No (If yes) What are they?

20. Generally, how would you assess the COMP-LAB's effectiveness this year? (Probe for specific criteria used, e.g., student or faculty response, writing progress, administrative support, etc.)

21. What has worked particularly well?

22. What has not worked well?

23. Have you received any feedback about the COMP-LAB's effectiveness from faculty teaching other courses?

24. Do you know of any changes in the college faculty's sentiments toward the program?

___ Yes ___ No (If yes) What changes have occurred?

... administrators' sentiments?

___ Yes ___ No (If yes) What changes have occurred?

25. Other comments?

ADMINISTRATORS' INTERVIEW

The first series of questions seeks background information on the program's development:

1. Why was the program developed? We'd like to know what needs, requirements, or pressures to which it sought to respond.

   - Were the pressures primarily internal or external?

   ___ Internal ___ External

2. What approach or approaches were used for teaching writing prior to this program?

3. (If a pilot project) When will a decision be made about whether or not the program will be continued?

4. Were other academic priorities superseded by this effort to strengthen students' writing skills?

   ___ Yes ___ No (If yes) What were they?

5. How would you assess the response to the decision to adopt this program? First, let's take the English Department faculty in general. Would you say they were generally "very favorable," "somewhat favorable," "indifferent," "not very favorable," or "not at all favorable"?

___ very ___ somewhat ___ indifferent ___ not very ___ not at all

(If the negative side of the scale, probe why)

6. How about faculty in other departments?

a. Are most well aware of this program? ___ Yes ___ No

b. Are they "very favorable", "somewhat favorable", "indifferent", "not very favorable", or "not at all favorable"?

___ very ___ somewhat ___ indifferent ___ not very ___ not at all

7. Have students enrolling in this program been drawn away from taking other English Department courses?

___ Yes ___ No

(If yes) How have faculty affected by this increased competition responded to this?

8. Do the teachers in the writing program generally find it a satisfying and rewarding experience?

___ Yes ___ No (Probe for reasons why)

9. Do most teachers in the program perceive that their departmental and institutional reward system is supportive of their involvement?

___ Yes ___ No (Probe for reasons why)

10. What are your own judgments about the program's quality?

a. What are its strengths?

b. What are its weaknesses?

11. How would you assess the cost effectiveness of this program compared to other alternatives?

12. What are some analyses that would provide some indications about the cost effectiveness of the Comp-Lab program?

13. Would there be a possibility that we could work at a later time with a member of your staff to explore the cost-effectiveness issue?

FERA
Formative Evaluation Research Associates

1130 Hill St.,
Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104
Phone: 313-994-9060

John Meeker,
Margaret Talburtt,
John Seeley

CLC

Dear Student,

We are trying to get some information about the writing classes at your school. You can help us by filling out this questionnaire. Your teacher will not see your answers. What you say will not affect your grade in the course, and the results of this research will not be used for placement of any kind. We want to know what you think, so please answer the questions as honestly as you can. Remember that there are no answers which are right or wrong. Circle the number which goes with your answer to each question. Your answers may help to make this course better for students in the future. Thanks for your help.

FERA Associates, Inc.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

ID# _____

Circle the number that goes with your answer for each question.

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Undecided	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
1. I was aware of what I would have to do to pass this course.	5	4	3	2	1
2. The way my papers were marked by my teacher made it clear how I could improve my writing.	5	4	3	2	1
3. What we did in the classroom helped me with my own writing problems.	5	4	3	2	1
4. We needed more time in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
5. My teacher was helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
6. My teacher seems to enjoy teaching writing.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I usually knew how well or poorly I was doing in the course.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I usually understood what was going on in class.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I learned a lot about writing from my fellow students, not just my teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I was always sure what I was expected to do on specific assignments.	5	4	3	2	1
11. My teacher was very familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of my writing.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I enjoyed working in the lab.	5	4	3	2	1
13. It was usually clear what I was supposed to do next, while working in the lab.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I understood the weekly reports.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I enjoyed working by myself without a teacher in the lab.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I enjoyed free writing.	5	4	3	2	1
17. It was important to listen to all of the lab tapes.	5	4	3	2	1

		Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Undecided	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
18.	It was important to do all the modules.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Free writing was helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Checking my own work helped me to understand my mistakes.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Understanding that a sentence consists of a kernal plus expansion helped me to correct my mistakes.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Working in the laboratory has taught me a lot about how to study for my other courses.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	It is fair for my grade to be based entirely on the papers I write.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Working on one kind of error at a time was helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	The COMP-LAB exercises were difficult.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	The exercises were confusing.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	The exercises were interesting and fun to do.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	The COMP-LAB exercises really helped me to understand grammar.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	It was clear what I was supposed to learn from each exercise.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	The COMP-LAB exercises helped with my own particular writing problems.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	We spent too much time in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	I usually only write when told to by my teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
33.	Handing in a composition makes me feel good.	5	4	3	2	1
34.	I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing.	5	4	3	2	1
35.	I like to have my friends read what I have written.	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Undecided	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
36. I'm nervous about writing.	5	4	3	2	1
37. I am required to write a lot in my other classes.	5	4	3	2	1
38. Whenever I can, I like to read.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in papers.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I wish we had more grammar study in this class.	5	4	3	2	1
41. Almost anyone can learn to write.	5	4	3	2	1
42. Trying to fix writing only makes it worse.	5	4	3	2	1
43. Speaking and writing are pretty much the same thing.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I wish we had had more class discussion in this class.	5	4	3	2	1
45. If you know grammar, you know how to write.	5	4	3	2	1
46. The ability to write well is important in college.	5	4	3	2	1
47. I wish we'd written more papers for this class.	5	4	3	2	1
48. The ability to write well helps you get a good job.	5	4	3	2	1
49. Writing things down helps me understand what I really think.	5	4	3	2	1
50. When I get a writing assignment, I have a pretty good idea of what to do to write a satisfactory paper.	5	4	3	2	1
51. I wish I'd spent more time in the lab.	5	4	3	2	1
52. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I now write more correctly.	5	4	3	2	1
53. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I now find it easier to express my ideas in writing.	5	4	3	2	1
54. Most modules were boring.	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Undecided	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
55. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I don't worry so much when I have to write something for school.	5	4	3	2	1
56. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I now enjoy writing more.	5	4	3	2	1

Rate the following writing skills from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most important for you, and 10 the least important for you. Although some may seem to be of equal difficulty, assign only one number to each skill and use each number only once.

57. ___ Putting sentences in the right order.

58. ___ Making it interesting.

59. ___ Finding a good idea.

60. ___ Spelling.

61. ___ Choosing the right words.

62. ___ Figuring out what to say about your idea.

63. ___ Punctuation.

64. ___ Putting words in the right order.

65. ___ Making the writing mean what you want it to say.

66. ___ Grammar.

Please complete the following information.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your sex? _____
3. What is your teacher's name? _____
4. What is your ethnic background? _____
5. What was your place of birth? _____
6. What is your native language? _____
7. What language do you speak at home? _____
8. How long have you lived in the United States? _____
9. Are you repeating this course? _____
10. How many courses did you take this term? _____
11. Have you previously been enrolled in a college but stopped attending for a while? ___ Yes ___ No
12. (If yes to question 11) For how many years were you not enrolled? _____

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Please circle the number that corresponds with your answer for each question.

1. My class used a grammar textbook.

___ Yes (If yes, answer questions 2-4) ___ No (If no, answer questions 5-8)

If YES to question 1	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Undecided	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
2. The text book was interesting	5	4	3	2	1
3. The text book was clear and easy to understand.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The textbook helped me with my own particular writing problems.	5	4	3	2	1

If NO to question 1

5. My class used grammar materials other than a textbook.

___ Yes (If yes, answer questions 6-8) ___ No (If no, go to question 9)

If YES to question 5

6. The grammar materials were interesting.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The grammar materials were clear and easy to understand.	5	4	3	2	1
8. The grammar materials helped me with my own particular writing problems.	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Undecided	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
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35. Writing things down helps me understand what I really think.	5	4	3	2	1
36. When I get a writing assignment, I have a pretty good idea of what to do to write a satisfactory paper.	5	4	3	2	1
37. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I now write more correctly.	5	4	3	2	1
38. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I now find it easier to express my ideas in writing.	5	4	3	2	1
39. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I don't worry so much when I have to write something for school.	5	4	3	2	1
40. Compared to the beginning of the semester, I now enjoy writing more.	5	4	3	2	1

Rate the following writing skills from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most important for you, and 10 the least important for you. Although some may seem to be of equal difficulty, assign only one number to each skill and use each number only once.

41. ___ Putting sentences in the right order.
42. ___ Making it interesting.
43. ___ Finding a good idea.
44. ___ Spelling.
45. ___ Choosing the right words.
46. ___ Figuring out what to say about your idea.
47. ___ Punctuation.
48. ___ Putting words in the right order.
49. ___ Making the writing mean what you want it to say.
50. ___ Grammar.

APPENDIX B

Analysis of Error Scores

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) provided the following information for each of the selected papers: (1) the number of words on the paper; (2) the number of finite verbs on the paper; (3) the number of verb-form errors; (4) the number of sentence errors; (5) the number of spelling errors; and (6) the number of other word form errors. With these scores, we created additional variables described in Figure 11 (page 41).

Before beginning the comparison using these variables, we made an important decision related to the sample. As mentioned earlier, in reviewing the sample, we found that in some cases only one of the possible four essays by a participant was selected while in other cases more than one essay by a participant was selected. Therefore, before conducting any analyses, we developed a special code to include all combinations of papers selected. This allowed us to divide the data into two sample groups: one, matched sample (e.g., when papers #1 and #9 by the same participant were selected), and the other for independent samples (i.e., entirely different participants with papers #1 and #9 selected). We chose this more careful approach in separating the sample for two reasons: first, the power of the statistical tests comparing mean error scores (the pairwise T-test for the matched sample and the student T-test for the independent samples) are different; and second, interpretation of the findings would be confounded if matched and unmatched samples were combined.

With the sampling problems controlled, we conducted comparisons to determine the following:

1. Experimental/Control group differences on "pre-test" papers #1 and #2 separately to see if the two groups began at the same place on these

FIGURE 11

ERROR SCORE VARIATIONS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSES

Basic Counts	Derivative Counts
1. Number of words on the paper	Number of words per verb
2. Number of finite verbs on the paper	Number of error types per 100 words (verb form errors, sentence errors, spelling errors, other errors)
3. Number of verb form errors	Number of error types per verb (verb form errors, sentence errors, spelling errors, other word form errors).
4. Number of sentence errors	Total number of errors per paper
5. Number of spelling errors	Total number of errors per 100 words
6. Number of other word form errors	Total number of errors per verb

variables.

2. Experimental/Control Group differences on "post-test" papers #8 and #9, separately to see if the two groups ended at the same place on these variables.
3. Experimental Group differences on pre-test/post-test papers #1 and #9 together and #2 and #8 together to see if change occurred.
4. Control Group differences on pre-test/post-test papers #1 and #9 together and #2 and #8 together to see if change occurred.
5. Experimental/Control Group comparisons combining scores from papers #1 and #2 to form one pre-test score for each variable (matched sample only).
6. Experimental/Control Group comparisons combining scores from papers #8 and #9 to form one post-test score for each variable (matched sample only).
7. Experimental Group comparisons of pre-test/post-test scores with papers #1 and #2 as pre-tests and #8 and #9 as post-tests (matched for pre-test; matched for post-test; independent pre-test/post-test samples only).
8. Control Group comparisons of pre-test/post-test scores with papers #1 and #2 as pre-tests and #8 and #9 as post-tests (matched for pre-test; matched for post-test; independent pre-test/post-test samples only).

In addition, the same comparisons described above were also made separately for each institution. Findings for South Central and Metropolitan Community Colleges were limited because the sample of papers selected from each of these institutions was smaller. With the division of the sample into matched and independent groups, there were too few cases to complete

some analyses. Figure 12 presents the number of papers from Experimental and Control Groups represented in the error count sample for each school.

With the sampling irregularities we used both parametric and non-parametric statistics for all comparisons. We used the non-parametric measures because we were not convinced that the sample distribution on all the variables would conform to the normal curve. We also used the parametric measures to compare the statistical results with those from the non-parametric analyses. In most cases, results were the same. That is, results found to be significant with one test were found the same with the other. However, in most cases, equality of variance, an important assumption underlying one's use of parametric statistics, could not be assumed. Therefore, in reporting significant findings, in most cases we presented results of non-parametric measures.

FIGURE 12
SIZE OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS BY SCHOOL: ERROR COUNT SAMPLE

Group	School*			Total
	1	2	3	
Experimental	90	20	28	138
Percentage (%) of total sample	30.1	6.7	9.4	46.2
Control	114	25	22	161
Percentage (%) of total sample	38.1	8.4	7.4	53.8

*School: 1 = York College
2 = South Central Community College
3 = Metropolitan Community College

Non-parametric statistical tests used included pairwise rank statistics for matched sample comparisons, the Mann-Whitney and Median Test for the two sample comparisons. Parametric statistics used included the Univariate Analysis

of Variance, the Pairwise T-test for matched-sample comparisons, and the student T-test for two-sample comparisons. Results of these analyses are presented in Evaluation Findings Chapter III .

TABLE 1

ERROR COUNT: MATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #1 and PAPER #9
MEANS BY GROUP[a]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 34			Control n= 30		
	Mean Count Paper #1	Paper #9	T-Stat	Mean Count Paper #1	Paper #9	T-Stat
A. Total Words	156.15	229.82	-5.97***	168.83	192.57	ns
B. Words/verb	7.55	7.75	ns	7.39	7.34	ns
C. Total verb form	1.71	1.79	ns	2.3	1.8	ns
D. Total sentence	2.15	1.59	1.72*	2.0	1.9	ns
E. Total spelling	4.59	3.18	ns	4.03	3.57	ns
F. Total other	1.62	1.71	ns	1.67	1.87	ns
G. Total	10.06	8.27	ns	10.03	9.13	ns
H. Verb form/100w	.017	.0179	ns	.0233	.0180	ns
I. Sentence/100w	.0215	.0159	1.72*	.02	.019	ns
J. Spelling/100w	.0459	.0318	ns	.0403	.0357	ns
K. Other/100w	.0162	.0171	ns	.0167	.0187	ns
L. Total/100w	.1001	.0827	ns	.1003	.0913	ns
M. Verb form/verb	.0769	.0637	ns	.1133	.0756	ns
N. Sentence/verb	.0986	.0526	3.90***	.0877	.0848	ns
O. Spelling/verb	.2204	.1056	3.49***	.1847	.1411	ns
P. Other/verb	.0795	.0585	ns	.0879	.0651	ns
Q. Total/verb	.4754	.2807	4.19***	.4736	.3665	ns

*$p < .09$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ns = not significant

a - Based on Pairwise T-tests

TABLE 2

ERROR COUNT: MATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #1 and PAPER #9
(Number of students by group showing increase, decrease, no change in performance)[a,b]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 34				Control n= 30			
	Student's Performance - Paper 9:				Student's Performance - Paper 9:			
	Increased	Decreased	Same	Signif	Increased	Decreased	Same	Signif
A. Total Words	30	4	0	.00	18	11	0	ns
B. Words/verb	16	18	0	ns	13	17	0	ns
C. Total verb form	8	15	11	ns	13	8	9	ns
D. Total sentence	17	8	9	ns	7	9	14	ns
E. Total spelling	23	10	1	.0351	13	12	5	ns
F. Total other	12	14	8	ns	10	13	7	ns
G. Total	11	20	3	ns	12	15	3	ns
Verb form/100w	8	15	11	ns	13	8	9	ns
I. Sentence/100w	17	8	9	ns	7	9	14	ns
J. Spelling/100w	23	10	1	.04	13	12	5	ns
K. Other/100w	12	14	8	ns	10	13	7	ns
L. Total/100w	20	11	3	ns	15	12	3	ns
M. Verb form/verb	15	14	5	ns	15	8	7	ns
N. Sentence/verb	25	6	3	.0009	13	10	7	ns
O. Spelling/verb	26	8	0	.0029	16	14	0	ns
P. Other/verb	15	14	5	ns	10	15	5	ns
Q. Total/verb	25	8	1	.0046	18	12	0	ns

a - Based on Wilcoxon matched-pair rank-sum statistics
b - Data in Table reflect students' performance on Paper #9. Significance indicates that the number of students showing increased performance on Paper #9 is not due to chance.

TABLE 3

ERROR COUNT: MATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #2 and PAPER #8
MEANS BY GROUP[a]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 31			Control n= 24		
	Mean Count Paper #2	Paper #8	T-Stat	Mean Count Paper #2	Paper #8	T-Stat
A. Total Words	208.35	248.65	-2.05**	198.96	219.21	ns
B. Words/verb	7.31	7.14	ns	7.58	7.08	ns
C. Total verb form	3.0	2.16	ns	2.29	1.29	ns
D. Total sentence	1.74	1.0	1.84*	1.25	1.04	ns
E. Total spelling	3.45	2.65	ns	3.71	2.08	2.28**
F. Total other	1.29	.67	1.89*	1.13	.708	ns
G. Total	9.48	6.48	2.44**	8.38	5.13	2.31**
H. Verb form/100w	.03	.022	ns	.023	.013	ns
I. Sentence/100w	.017	.010	1.84*	.013	.010	ns
J. Spelling/100w	.035	.026	ns	.037	.021	2.28**
K. Other/100w	.013	.068	1.89*	.011	.071	ns
L. Total/100w	.095	.065	2.44**	.084	.051	2.31**
M. Verb form/verb	.105	.057	2.45**	.072	.047	ns
N. Sentence/verb	.059	.032	1.99**	.047	.036	ns
O. Spelling/verb	.128	.081	2.55*	.133	.071	2.73*
P. Other/verb	.047	.020	2.29**	.043	.029	ns
Q. Total/verb	.34	.190	4.26*	.294	.184	2.62*

*$p < .09$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ns = not significant

a - Based on Pairwise T-tests

TABLE 4

ERROR COUNT: MATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #2 and PAPER #8
(Number of students by group showing increased, decrease, no change in performance)[a,b]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n=31				Control n=24			
	Student's Performance - Paper 8:				Student's Performance - Paper 8:			
	Increased	Decreased	Same	Signif	Increased	Decreased	Same	Signif
A. Total Words	21	10	0	(.07)	12	12	0	ns
B. Words/verb	11	13	7	ns	9	14	1	ns
C. Total verb form	11	13	7	ns	13	4	7	.049
D. Total sentence	16	8	7	ns	9	9	6	ns
E. Total spelling	15	9	7	ns	13	7	4	ns
F. Total other	11	5	15	ns	8	5	11	ns
G. Total	21	7	3	.013	16	7	1	(.09)
H. Verb form/100w	13	11	7	ns	13	4	7	.049
I. Sentence/100w	16	8	7	ns	9	9	6	ns
J. Spelling/100w	15	9	7	ns	13	7	4	ns
K. Other/100w	11	5	15	ns	8	5	11	ns
L. Total/100w	21	7	3	.013	16	7	1	(.09)
M. Verb form/verb	19	9	3	(.09)	13	6	5	ns
N. Sentence/verb	18	8	5	(.08)	11	9	4	ns
O. Spelling/verb	19	10	2	ns	17	5	2	.0169
P. Other/verb	17	6	8	.035	9	8	7	ns
Q. Total/verb	25	5	1	.003	17	7	0	(.06)

a - Based on Wilcoxon matched-pair rank-sum statistics
b - Data in Table reflect students' performance on Paper #8. Significance indicates that the number of students showing increased performance on Paper #8 is not due to chance.

TABLE 5

ERROR COUNT: UNMATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #1 and PAPER #9[a]
MEANS BY GROUP

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 26;43			Control n= 41;44		
	Mean Count Paper #1	Mean Count Paper #9	T-Stat	Mean Count Paper #1	Mean Count Paper #9	T-Stat
A. Total Words	171.23	234.26	-3.29*	177.05	220.30	2.34**
B. Words/verb	8.52	7.64	2.19**	7.44	7.60	ns
C. Total verb form	2.19	1.26	2.33**	1.93	1.59	ns
D. Total sentence	2.81	1.63	2.35**	2.29	1.77	ns
E. Total spelling	3.92	3.16	ns	6.51	4.27	1.91**
F. Total other	1.46	1.49	ns	1.54	1.84	ns
Total	10.39	7.53	2.07**	12.27	9.48	ns
H. Verb form/100w	.022	.013	2.32**	.019	.016	ns
I. Sentence/100w	.028	.016	2.35**	.023	.018	ns
J. Spelling/100w	.039	.032	ns	.065	.043	1.9**
K. Other/100w	.015	.015	ns	.015	.018	ns
L. Total/100w	.104	.075	2.07**	.123	.095	ns
M. Verb form/verb	.114	.042	4.05*	.069	.058	ns
N. Sentence/verb	.139	.059	3.68*	.093	.062	ns
O. Spelling/verb	.204	.968	2.88*	.281	.153	3.02***
P. Other/verb	.071	.047	ns	.062	.063	ns
Q. Total/verb	.528	.246	5.27*	.506	.335	2.97***

*$p < .09$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ns = not significant

a - Based on Two-sample T-tests.

TABLE 6

ERROR COUNT: UNMATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #1 and PAPER #9
(Number of students scoring below, above, or equal to the median score)[a,b]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 43				Control n= 44			
	Student's Performance - Paper 9:				Student's Performance - Paper 9:			
	N<MEDIAN	N>MEDIAN	N=MED	Signif	N<MEDIAN	N>MEDIAN	N=MED	Signif
A. Total Words	14	28	1	.0004	15	28	1	.014
B. Words/verb	25	17	1	.004	21	23	0	ns
C. Total verb form	17	16	10	.032	15	16	13	ns
D. Total sentence	25	9	9	.008	19	17	8	ns
E. Total spelling	14	20	9	ns	24	16	4	.0439
F. Total other	17	16	10	ns	11	17	16	ns
G. Total	31	15	5	.036	25	17	2	ns
H. Verb form/100w	17	16	10	.032	15	16	13	ns
I. Sentence/100w	25	9	9	.008	19	17	8	ns
J. Spelling/100w	14	20	9	ns	24	16	4	.0437
K. Other/100w	17	16	10	ns	11	17	16	ns
L. Total/100w	23	15	5	.036	25	17	2	ns
M. Verb form/verb	27	15	1	.0014	25	19	0	ns
N. Sentence/verb	28	14	1	.0001	25	18	1	(.076)
O. Spelling/verb	22	20	1	ns	27	17	0	.0039
P. Other/verb	23	19	1	ns	24	18	2	ns
Q. Total/verb	23	15	5	.000	25	19	0	.0065

a - Based on Mann-Whitney U tests; median tests. Table shows Paper #9 data.
N<MEDIAN suggests few errors on Features C-Q.
N>MEDIAN suggests improvement on Features A and B.

b - Significance indicates that the number of students improved performance on Paper #9 is not due to chance.

TABLE 7

ERROR COUNT: UNMATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #2 and PAPER #8
MEANS BY GROUP[a]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 28;41			Control n= 47;46		
	Mean Count Paper #2	Mean Count Paper #8	T-Stat	Mean Count Paper #2	Mean Count Paper #8	T-Stat
A. Total Words	248.43	222.73	ns	235.98	250.91	ns
B. Words/verb	7.74	7.32	ns	7.22	7.50	ns
C. Total verb form	3.04	1.81	2.05**	2.19	1.76	ns
D. Total sentence	3.04	1.09	3.37***	2.98	2.15	ns
E. Total spelling	4.18	3.24	ns	5.47	4.28	ns
F. Total other	.857	.732	ns	1.53	.869	2.24**
Total	11.11	6.88	2.72*	12.17	9.07	1.97**
H. Verb form/100w	.030	.018	2.05**	.022	.018	ns
I. Sentence/100w	.030	.011	3.37***	.029	.022	ns
J. Spelling/100w	.042	.032	ns	.055	.043	ns
K. Other/100w	.008	.007	ns	.015	.009	2.24**
L. Total/100w	.111	.068	2.72***	.122	.091	1.97**
M. Verb form/verb	.10	.647	1.7*	.069	.055	ns
N. Sentence/verb	.106	.033	3.68***	.089	.073	ns
O. Spelling/verb	.151	.118	ns	.168	.134	ns
P. Other/verb	.030	.028	ns	.053	.028	2.08**
Q. Total/verb	.388	.244	2.39*	.379	.290	1.81*

*$p < .09$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ns = not significant

a - Based on Two-sample T-tests.

TABLE 8

ERROR COUNT: UNMATCHED SAMPLE
COMPARISON OF PAPER #2 and PAPER #8
(Number of students scoring below, above, or equal to the median score)[a,b]

FEATURES EVALUATED (Number and type: C-Q refer to errors)	EXPERIMENTAL n= 41				Control n= 46			
	Student's Performance - Paper 8:				Student's Performance - Paper 8:			
	N< MEDIAN	N> MEDIAN	N=MED	Signif	N< MEDIAN	N> MEDIAN	N=MED	Signif
A. Total Words	21	19	1	ns	22	22	2	ns
B. Words/verb	22	19	0	ns	20	25	1	ns
C. Total verb form	23	10	8	.029	26	14	6	ns
D. Total sentence	18	12	11	.004	22	16	8	(.09)
E. Total spelling	23	11	7	.021	17	23	6	ns
F. Total other	0	17	24	ns	21	11	14	(.09)
G. Total	25	16	0	.003	25	19	2	ns
H. Verb form/100w	23	10	8	.029	26	14	6	(.09)
I. Sentence/100w	18	12	11	.004	22	16	8	ns
J. Spelling/100w	23	11	7	.021	17	23	6	ns
K. Other/100w	0	17	24	ns	21	11	14	(.09)
L. Total/100w	23	14	4	.003	25	19	2	ns
M. Verb form/verb	24	16	1	.034	27	18	1	(.09)
N. Sentence/verb	26	14	1	.001	26	19	1	ns
O. Spelling/verb	25	16	0	.034	22	23	1	ns
P. Other/verb	0	17	24	ns	27	19	0	ns
Q. Total/verb	23	14	4	.011	26	20	0	ns

a - Based on Mann Whitney U tests; median tests. Table shows Paper #8 data.
N<MEDIAN suggests few errors on Features C-Q.
N>MEDIAN suggests improvement on Features A and B.

b - Significance indicates that the number of students showing improved performance on Paper #8 is not due to chance.

Appendix B

AGREEMENT BETWEEN DIRECTORS AND FERA

FERA will meet with CLPD after preliminary analyses have been completed. Based on input from this meeting, further analysis will be done and a Final Report drafted. In order to clarify questions of fact only, the Final Report will be subject to critique by CLPD before completion. FERA's responsibilities will conclude upon receipt by CLPD of the Final Report. FERA's Final Report will be included in its entirety in CLPD's final report to the Exxon Education Foundation.

Personnel

Margaret A. Talburtt will serve as FERA's director for this evaluation. As such, her responsibilities will include: coordination of all evaluation activities, review of all research instruments, and production of the Final Report. She will act as liaison between CLPD and all contractors to insure both that the evaluation serves the needs of the COMP-LAB Project personnel, and that the evaluation remains independent of CLPD.

John Meeker will serve a second but distinct role. The design of the instruments for the attitudinal survey and the interviews will be his major responsibility. The majority of the interviewing will be carried out by him, although Margaret Talburtt will assist. Preliminary data analysis will be his task.

Evaluation Activities

The evaluation activities to be conducted are:

1. The evaluation of writing samples by:

   a. a holistic measure
   b. an error-count

2. The evaluation of the project by:

   a. describing the experimental and control course work;
   b. assessing the attitudes of experimental and control students toward writing and toward the course itself;
   c. assessing the attitudes of experimental and control teachers toward the course;
   d. describing and analyzing demographic patterns among students including such factors as retention rates and passing rates, and (at York College) affiliation with SEEK;

e. assessing the transferability of the experimental course by determining those variables which are most influential across all three sites;
f. describing and analyzing demographic patterns among teachers including such factors as experience teaching the course;
g. assessing the costs of the experimental and control courses;
h. assessing any institutional factors which seem significant (such as flexibility of scheduling, faculty development, etc.).

The data sources for this evaluation are:

1. experimental and control students;
2. experimental and control teachers;
3. supervisors of labs;
4. project coordinators at each institution;
5. institutional administrators.

The work analysis detailed in Figure 1 shows FERA's activities and the amount of time to be spent on each activity.

Costs

The budget for this project is $27,826.00. Payment for evaluation services will be scheduled as follows (though in the event of a termination of this agreement prior to completion of the project, only services actually performed shall be recompensed):

Due:	December 15, 1978	$18,413.00*
	January 15, 1979	3,706.00
	March 1, 1979	3,707.00
	April 10, 1979 or upon receipt of Final Report	2,000.00

*Includes $9,000 for test scoring costs.

Invoices will be sent at least fifteen days prior to the due date.

Public Nature of Results

FERA, Inc., is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to the improvement of postsecondary education. Its research work is public and cannot be for the sole private use of a client. Therefore, final reports of FERA's evaluations are available upon request for a nominal charge to cover printing, postage, and handling. FERA would welcome opportunities to report, with CLPD, on this evaluation at professional meetings and in other professional contexts.

Summary

This memorandum when signed by both parties serves as an agreement for services to be provided. Modifications to this agreement must be agreed upon in writing and signed by both parties. It is understood that, insofar as possible, the spirit and letter of this memorandum shall be incorporated into any contract for services entered into by the parties and the Research Foundation of The City University of New York.

For FERA

Margaret A. Talburtt
Margaret A. Talburtt, Associate

John C. Meeker
John C. Meeker, Associate

Date

For CLPD

Carolyn Kirkpatrick
Diane T. Goss
Signed

Michael G Southwell
~~Title~~ Project Directors

4 December 1978
Date

Appendix C

ASSIGNMENT SHEETS

YC
Group 1

assignment sheet, paper 7

NAME_____

SOCIAL SECURITY #_____

You are allowed to spend one hour and 40 minutes (1.7 hours) in writing this paper, but no more.

Try to use your time as follows:
1/4 planning your paper
1/4 writing a rough draft
1/4 editing your rough draft
1/4 writing a final copy, and proofreading

You may use scratch paper and a dictionary. Write the final copy of your paper on paper-writing paper.

WRITE A PAPER IN WHICH YOU AGREE
OR DISAGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT:

Families should be limited to two children.

Your job in this paper is to persuade your teacher and fellow students that your opinion about this statement makes sense. Support your opinion with details from your own experience, your knowledge of others, your reading, etc.

Now hand in both copies of your paper, along with this assignment sheet.

YC
Group 1

assignment sheet, paper 8

NAME_____

SOCIAL SECURITY #_____

You are allowed to spend one hour and 40 minutes (1.7 hours) in writing this paper, but no more.

Try to use your time as follows:
1/4 planning your paper
1/4 writing a rough draft
1/4 editing your rough draft
1/4 writing a final copy, and proofreading

You may use scratch paper and a dictionary. Write the final copy of your paper on paper-writing paper.

WRITE A PAPER ON THIS TOPIC:

Explain an experience which influenced you greatly.

Your job in this paper is to describe your experience to your teacher and fellow students, and to explain to them why it had such an influence on you.

Now hand in both copies of your paper, along with this assignment sheet.

Appendix D

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR ERROR COUNT

error count variable #1: verb forms

sample kinds	examples
1. agreement	he go [simple verbs] I goes does they want [in verb phrases]
2. past-tense forms	yesterday he play yesterday he do play I wented I runned
3. missing copula	he my brother he waiting for me
4. infinitives	I want to goes
5. gerunds	because of my saiding that I like been at home
6. participles	a prejudice person [adjectives] it has happen [in verb phrases] I have ran I have being
7. main verbs in phrases	should he gets did he went does he goes
8. inappropriate tense	yesterday I have been

NOTES:

a. These errors are all characterized by faulty inflection.

b. A verb correctly inflected but misspelled = #3: spelling.
examples: he dosen't
it was throwen
he trys
it was droped

error count variable #2: sentences

sample kinds	examples
1. fragments	In the city. Because he lived in the city. Who lived in the city. The man who lived in the city.
2. run-ons/comma splices	I like the city I live in New York. I like the city, I live in New York.
3. confused sentences	By living in the city is frustrating.

NOTES:

a. Confused sentences are almost always blends of two separate sentences: By living in the city is frustrating =
By living in the city, one . . .
+ Living in the city is frustrating.

b. Sentence errors are often compounded:
By living in the city is frustrating, it's very noisy =
2 mistakes: confused sentence + run-on/comma splice

error count variable #3: spelling

sample kinds	examples
1. simple	typewritter independance violents
2. wrong words	their/there/they're where/were when/went lie/lay affect/effect
3. noun and verb forms	two librarys he trys he shoped
4. contractions	I dont I do'nt I'am I'm am

NOTES:

a. Correctly inflected but misspelled words are included in this category. Words lacking necessary inflections (or with incorrect inflections) are included in other categories as appropriate.

error count variable #4: other word forms

sample kinds	examples
1. noun plural forms	two dog two dog's two childs two mens some informations
2. noun possessive forms	the boy dog the boys dog one boys' dog
3. pronoun forms	him and I went mines hisself
4. pronoun reference	my friend . . . their teachers . . . she
5. adjective/adverb forms	a happily person it works easy
6. adjective/adverb comparison	most bestest gooder quicklier

NOTES:

a. Nominal adjectives are frequently valid alternatives to noun possessives: the car door = the car's door.

b. Pronoun reference shifts or mistakes within a sentence should be included; shifts or mistakes across sentences should be excluded.

error count excluded variables

sample kinds	examples
1. multiple negatives	he don't never
2. scribal conventions:	paragraph indentation erratic lineation incorrect commas incorrect abbreviation incorrect hyphenation incorrect capitalization etc.
3. unidiomatic usage	
4. quotation marks	
5. usage in flux	who/whom the reason is because . . . everybody . . . their he drives slow being as . . .

NOTES:

a. Whatever seems to be an error almost certainly is an error.

b. Resolve ambiguities about the existence of an error in favor of correctness.

c. Resolve uncertainties with the Chief Reader.

d. Each occurrence of a repeated error should be counted.

e. It is not uncommon for errors to be compounded.
example: he do'nt = #1 verb forms
#3 spelling

f. Sample kinds of errors are for guidance; errors should be counted into four gross categories.

Appendix E

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR RELIABILITY STUDY

ALL PAPERS

	E-K	E-S	K-S	A-E	A-K	A-S
verbs	.9391	.9149	.8957	.4961	.5147	.6391
sentences	.8817	.7706	.8987	.6734	.7716	.7870
spelling	.9056	.8411	.9415	.7614	.8596	.7765
other	.7871	.7671	.6101	.5610	.4417	.3646
total	.9586	.9463	.9567	.8993	.9111	.8639

HIGH PAPERS

verbs	.9192	.9635	.8650	.8495	.8377	.7360
sentences	.8257	.6555	.9548	.5060	.7732	.7970
spelling	.8914	.8519	.9252	.6370	.5309	.3498
other	.8296	.8864	.8520	.7135	.7421	.7557
total	.9385	.8147	.9030	.6784	.7142	.4541

LOW PAPERS

verbs	.9249	.8917	.8526	.2322	.2700	.5431
sentences	.9241	.8540	.8190	.8163	.7737	.8472
spelling	.8616	.8105	.9518	.7067	.8966	.8732
other	.7937	.9049	.8808	.4612	.1322	.4152
total	.9548	.9730	.9651	.9716	.9539	.9565

E-K=Epes-Kirkpatrick correlation
E-S=Epes-Southwell correlation
K-S=Kirkpatrick-Southwell correlation
A-E=ETS rater-Epes correlation
A-K=ETS rater-Kirkpatrick correlation
A-S=ETS rater-Southwell correlation

Appendix F

TESTIMONY FROM USERS OF COMP-LAB COURSE OR LAB MATERIALS

Excerpts from a report by Judith Edelstein,
Malcolm-King College Extension, New York

Description of Program

In an attempt to enhance and enlarge the existing Writing Workshop at Malcolm-King, a thorough investigation of several college-level remedial writing programs within the metropolitan area was made. The program that seemed best suited to our needs was the Comp-Lab project at York College. It seemed especially appropriate because of its flexibility. It was our intention to adapt the Comp-Lab materials, which are suitable and precise, to our own more individualized approach in the teaching of developmental writing skills. In addition, Professor Epes offered us a great deal of cooperation and advice at the onset and throughout our undertaking.

So as to fully evaluate the Comp-Lab's impact upon students, an "experiment" was carried out during the spring 1979 semester. Two "experimental" classes came to the lab and one "control" group attended class two nights a week and used materials provided by the instructors.

The lab was open three evenings a week from 5 to 7:45 p.m. Each class came to the lab one night a week for approximately two and one-half hours with its instructor. The lab was staffed by a supervisor, two classroom instructors and two tutors in different numbers each night. All staff worked in groups as well as individually with students during the semester.

Since we did not have a sufficient number of tape recorders, the main source of instruction came directly from the lab materials. Each student had a folder which contained his/her current work and a file folder in which copies of each completed exercise were kept. In the active folder was stapled a progress sheet that maintained a record of the exercises completed each time the student came to the lab as well as comments made by the coordinator or student him/herself pertaining to problems, etc. The progress sheet served as a major means of communication between the individual who checked the folder each week and the student.

As a result of observing students in the lab and checking their folders, it seemed that approximately half the group was able to work well on their own with occasional assistance only. The others needed help on a regular basis. The first group coincidentally had scored higher on an objective pre-test that was administered the first seek of class. (The pre-test was based upon subject matter covered in the first seven modules.)

Initially students were encouraged to work at their own pace. However, after several weeks, it became apparent that a wide disparity had developed among the modules students were working on. At this point the instructors began to give an introduction to the module every other week in class, thereby hoping to get those who were behind on a more rigorous schedule. Unfortunately, by the time this was instituted, it was too late, for those that were behind still had to complete their unfinished modules before tackling new ones. Approximately one-fourth of the students did not complete the seven modules by the end of the semester.

Malcolm-King - 2

Passing Students

Malcolm-King students pass Preliminary English 2 on the basis of a final writing sample which is read by two different instructors and evaluated using a point system similar to those of other colleges. Students who do not pass it the first time are permitted to take it again within the nest two weeks to see if they can pass it given a second chance.

In addition to the writing sample, students in the "experimental" group were given an objective test, similar to one of their exercises . . . .

The following table illustrates the promotion statistics of both the experimental and control groups. . . .

	PE 1*	Comp**	Withdraw	Fail	Y Grade***	TOTAL
Experimental	11	6-7	12	1	6	36
Control	10	1	10	3	3	27

*PE 1 - second semester of remedial English
**Comp - Freshman Composition
***Y grade - review of skills not yet mastered before going on to PE 1

. . .

Coordinator's Evaluation

Despite the fact that the "experiment" lasted one term and was in an embryonic stage, and that the staff was entirely new to its tasks, the first semester of the lab seemed to be quite successful. Most of the students were enthusiastic and enjoyed the material as well as the method of learning. In addition, it would seem that little administrative work would be required in the future, once the system is established, thus freeing the lab staff to concentrate more on assisting students and expanding the program to help referred students not enrolled on the actual courses. Also since a good number of students can work on their own, staff is free to help those who have a more difficult time absorbing the material. The program, at least as it has been adapted at Malcolm-King, allows for a great deal of individualization.

It is my hope that the Comp-Lab program remains at Malcolm-King, for I believe that with time and experience the "experiment" will grow, very quickly, to become a major strength in the Study Skills Department.

Excerpts from a report by Barbara Gray,
Polytechnic Institute of New York

. . . At the end of my first term of COMP-LAB use, I'm very pleased. About 60 students used the lab facility, mostly on an individual basis. That's about 1/6 of our total enrollment in the three courses whose students might have used the lab. That number does not include one class, about 20 people, who went as a group several times. The vast majority of students were referred by their teachers . . . .

The materials were used by students in our advanced ESL, Freshman Composition, and basic writing sections. They seem to have been particularly useful in the ESL and basic writing courses, as freshman composition at POLY does not tend to enroll students particularly in need of tutoring in grammar, though it may have more in the spring when the basic writing graduates will take it.

Let me share with you the apparent results of two brief questionnaires that I circulated, one to students and one to faculty. First, the students:

Twenty-eight responded to the questionnaire, having done a total of 77 1/2 modules. They found the tapes quite helpful: 20 identified them as such, 7 were doubtful or did not use them. Twenty would recommend the lab materials to friends in need of help in specific areas of English; only one expressed reservations about recommending them, and only one would not recommend them.

An Osgood semantic differential that I set up, albeit unscientifically, seems to suggest that the tapes and text run the gambit from being found interesting to being found boring. Most students found them easy rather than difficult, and the great majority thought they were clear, not confusing. Also only two suggested that they were not useful.

Faculty reponse, too, was generally positive. Seven out of 12 responded and reported sending 63 students to do a total of 110 modules. (82 were actually completed, perhaps suggesting a need for stronger encouragement from faculty and program administrator.)

Generally, they felt that the carry-over was clear in the work of students who had done the modules, though they wondered how long the improvement would last, a legitimate question regarding any form of grammatical instruction. And, they all wanted the program to be available next term. They suggested a wide range of modifications, but fewer than half included the use of live tutors.

I feel that the COMP-LAB materials, as they stand, are ideal for a program like ours, a small program at an institution that is unable to commit substantial revenues to its writing program. The materials provide superb discussion and exercise in the most widely needed areas of English grammar. In so doing, they meet a need that in many places is met by live tutors, but they do so far less expensively and far more reliably. . . . Let me mention some of the drawbacks that [tutors] present: they need to be trained; they can be absent, or late; they can be wrong in what they tell students; they can become unethically involved in producing a piece of writing; they can become part of an endless variety of complex, and distracting, social relationships with their tutees. All of these problems, to name a few, COMP-LAB bypasses. The one thing it doesn't do is to teach rhetorical principles, but most writing faculty would agree with me that that is better done in the classroom . . . .

Excerpts from a report by Donna Grout,
Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri

. . . [Here] is a review of how the modules are used in our LU writing program

ENGLISH 100 Modules 1-7 in order

Students meet four times a week in this developmental course. One of these meetings is lab day for module work. Students are also encouraged to make use of as many extra lab hours as are available for outside-of-class work, provided they qualify for a lab pass (excellent attendance, class work done, etc.). . . .

ENGLISH 101-152

The regular comp courses have the modules also if they wish them. Teachers can assign any of the 18 to students to do during open lab hours for 101-152 students. This is strictly outside-of-class help. If teachers begin to get on to this (tutors are already on to it), it will free up tutors to assist in paper process work and allow individual students to crash-learn pronoun agreement or whatever they are weak in.

What do students and teachers think about the modules so far?

1. Students (just about all are 100 students) for the most part react favorably to the modules. Sometimes they do so for the right reasons and sometimes for the wrong reasons. For example: some have reported that they like being able to play parts of the tape until they have learned the content rather than be embarrassed by having to ask the same questions over and over. Others like the immediate rewards or punishments the exercises provide and feel as if they are competing against themselves. This relaxes them, but at the same time it keeps up their interest. On the other side of the coin, some students do not like auto-tutorial (hate the tapes, dislike doing exercise after exercise, etc.), but we believe they are in the minority. Also, others take the modules too seriously. That is, they come to think of them as the course, since the modules are concrete for them. Such students are usually taught by instructors who have not done their homework concerning the modules or the new writing program. Their own lack of concreteness and unity, their habit of ignoring the goals of the course (even though the students are all given copies) and teaching their own private goals create an atmosphere which fosters such over-attachment to the modules by certain students. This need for concreteness by so many students could easily be put to constructive use by teachers, and it is put to such use by those teachers who have done their homework.

2. Teachers (again, those teaching 100) appear to like the modules, although again not always for good reasons. Those of us who have prepared ourselves for the new program like the modules for these reasons: a. they are very interrelated--they immerse a student in Standard English grammar rather than try to spot bandage him with different elements of it; b. the tests become progressively more difficult. . .; c. all the exercises call for writing; d. they provide concrete connections to writing for the students and give the teacher something concrete to explain a common error with (ex: This is a Module 1 error--can you find it and correct it?).

. . . I believe that the modules are the best self-instructional material I have seen of this kind. Certainly they work best in lab format--workbooks have never been particularly successful in my view, and in fact they contradict the

method of checking and the challenge of the writing test. . . .

2. I particularly like the way the modules build within themselves and between and amongst each other. A basic writer must do them in order because of this; otherwise he must make leaps, and he has absolutely no leaping ability.

3. The tapes are somewhat tedious, and in fact about 1/2 the students last term tried their best to avoid listening to them after the first three. . . . Regardless of such complaints, other students like them, and I am convinced that the more senses are working, the better the chance of retention in any learning situation--English or not.

4. The numbering system is rather overwhelming at the first look (remember I got them all at once), but has proved incredibly important for everything from form-filling-in to answer-checking.

5. I appreciate the self-responsibility the modules try to encourage in students (too many manage to avoid it, of course, but there is no faulting the modules for this). . . .

FERA
Formative Evaluation Research Associates

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Phone: 313-994-9060

John Meeker,
Margaret Talburtt,
John Seeley

To: COMP-LAB Project Directors (CLPD)

From: Margaret A. Talburtt, Associate

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding between CLPD and FERA, Inc., for Evaluation of the COMP-LAB Project

Date: November 29, 1978

Purpose

Following the meeting on November 14, 1978, the York College COMP-LAB Project Directors (CLPD) and the FERA Associates agreed on the framework and details for FERA's evaluation of the COMP-LAB Project. This memorandum of understanding describes our working relationship, outlines the work to be done, and provides a budget for the evaluation.

FERA's evaluation of the COMP-LAB Project is to be carried out independently of the COMP-LAB Project personnel. Initial planning of the evaluation will be done by FERA in consultation with CLPD and with independent consultation as such seems necessary; but final responsibility for the design of the evaluation will be FERA's. Execution of the evaluation, and supervision of any portions done by contractors, will be FERA's sole responsibility. CLPD will have only the right to observe such parts of the execution of the evaluation as do not involve interviews with teachers, students, or others. Analysis of the data will be FERA's sole responsibility. Interpretation of the data, for the purposes of the Final Report, will be done by FERA in consultation with CLPD, but final responsibility for the interpretation of the data will be FERA's. The spirit is one of cooperation and communication in the planning and reporting of the evaluation; however, in any cases of disagreement, FERA will resolve questions of evaluation design, procedures, and interpretation.

The scoring of writing samples will be contracted for by FERA from appropriate individuals or organizations. CLPD will insure that the plan for scoring of writing samples is consistent with the priorities of the writing program. FERA will be responsible for the analysis of data from the writing samples.

FERA will be responsible for maintaining the anonymity of the data. The raw data will remain at all times the property of FERA, but FERA will not be permitted any unilateral use of the data after the termination of this agreement. CLPD will have access to any coded or summary data files. The spirit of this agreement, however, encourages collaboration between FERA and CLPD in the preparation of further reports, articles, etc.